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NEW ZEALAND SLANG

A Dictionary of Colloquialisms

The first comprehensive survey yet made
of indigenous English speech in this country
—from the argot of whaling days to
children's slang in the twentieth century.

by

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*Dictionary of Australian
Slang and Colloquialisms*

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To
L.S. *and* S.G.B.
Without whom



PREFACE

THIS book is the offshoot of a Dictionary of Australasian Colloquial Speech upon which I have been working for many years. It is the first work of its kind published in this Dominion and there are probably numerous omissions. Needless to say, I shall be deeply grateful for words and phrases which, through ignorance, I have omitted.

For assistance and advice given to me on the subjects with which this book deals I wish to express gratitude to Messrs. Eric Partridge (the English slang expert), Alan Reeve and Ross McGill (all of London); Professor James Shelley, Professor Arnold Wall, Dr. G. H. Scholefield, Dr. I. L. G. Sutherland, Mrs. A. E. Woodhouse, Misses E. M. Smith, J. Smith and M. Johnston, Messrs. L. G. D. Acland (to whom I am greatly indebted), Alan Mulgan, E. H. McCormick, C. R. H. Taylor, A. G. Bagnall, P. G. B. Harding, N. O'D. Alexander, H. G. Miller, J. Pascoe, E. S. Andrews, and many others.

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NEW ZEALAND SLANG

Chapter I

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

FOR the best part of a century a substantial proportion of the white population of New Zealand has been content—nay, has even preferred—to regard itself as English rather than British. In literary records dating from the earliest days we may find the “more English than the English” cliché expounded time and again. It has become a sort of tradition with New Zealanders, inherited in some vague fashion from their past, coloured by sentiment and time, accepted by rote. As long ago as 1842, H. W. Petre, writing in *Account of the Settlements of the New Zealand Company*, spoke of “the Britain of the South.” The same phrase was used as a sub-title by Charles Hursthouse in his book *New Zealand*, published in 1857. And so it has gone on. Even in the *Cambridge History of the British Empire*, vol. VII, part 2, we find a frequent repetition of that ill-considered theme “more English than the English.”

In the uncritical fashion that characterises those who believe what they wish to believe, a vast number of people have chosen to regard New Zealand as another England and to perceive in our antipodean life no strong contrasts to English life, only modifications of it. Yet, if we care to look for it, there is much more than merely geographical evidence against such a contention, and only want of analysis of the cliché has prevented our decently burying it long ago.

It is to be doubted whether the average New Zealander—the New Zealand-born man or woman who has suffi-

cient affection for his or her country not to seek escape in English sentimentalism—is greatly attached to the “more English than the English” view. It appeals mainly to snobbish sycophants of English tradition, and as they grow fewer so will the cliché die, though not without a struggle and not without having an effect on our literature. In her recently-published *History of New Zealand Fiction* Miss E. M. Smith has some pertinent remarks to make on the matter.

“In the books of New Zealand writers one is constantly being reminded that the author is an exile (from England),” she writes, “and where the description of New Zealand is not disparaging it savours of the guide-book with a plentiful supply of unnatural Maoris, luxuriant bush and the Pink and White Terraces thrown in for good measure.” Elsewhere she adds the comment: “New Zealand writers have always been lavish in their use of local colour. That is, they have introduced Maoris and Maori words, described the bush, commented on the diet of mutton and tea, stressed our love of England, and hoped thereby to create a New Zealand atmosphere. But very few writers indeed have succeeded in capturing the spirit of the country.”

The fault of much of our literature to date, in short, is that it is dull, hackneyed and barren. There has been too much imitation of English styles both in prose and poetry and, as a result, a great deal of our literature has been left without living native roots of its own.

In the evolution of language is the story of human development. Language is the coursing of blood through the veins of society; it is alive, it is essential. Our language is never static: it is always growing, changing, merging strange new meanings into old words, evolving new words to replace the old, just as society itself is continually moving from one stage of development to another.

Restlessness is the force behind social change, and this restlessness is never displayed better than in the evolu-

tion of popular speech . . . in slang, in underworld cant, in vulgarisms, in the happy emergence of new idioms. Here, indeed, is the outward evidence of growth that outruns such material evidence as the building of large cities and the creation of new industry.

Since it touches us all, since indeed it has its roots in our simplest needs and pleasures, in friendship and business and entertainment, speech mirrors our social growth more intimately, and perhaps even more accurately, than any historical analysis. It is for this reason that when a writer fails to make his characters live and talk as human beings, he fails to breathe life into his story. Language is something more than words between the covers of a book. It is a weapon, wielded ceaselessly in question and answer, repartee and argument, in gossip and learning. We cannot be without it. If we were bereft of it we would be alone in a great silence. And if there is one thing the ordinary mortal likes less than anything else, it is sustained silence.

In the *Cambridge History (supra)*, Dr. G. H. Scholefield remarks: "It may be said that New Zealand writers both of verse and prose have failed to create a distinctive literature, not from lack of matter, but for want of individuality in treatment. They have fashioned their expression so closely upon approved English models as to rob it of any distinction."

He is, perhaps, over kind. Fortunately, there are a number of young writers in New Zealand to-day who realize that their country has an identity of its own and that it is no longer necessary to interpret it in terms of England. For the first time we can honestly say that we have writers, students, and poets who are accommodated to their own environment and who are not hankering remorselessly after (what they imagine to be) Places Where Things Happen.

We need not shed many tears over our literary apprenticeship. It was inevitable; it is almost over. America

and Australia passed through the same phases. It is only since the beginning of this century that Australia has been able to boast a reasonably strong indigenous literature of her own—Joseph Furphy, Dyson, C. J. Dennis, A. H. Davis, Norman Lindsay, Brian Penton, Miles Franklin and Tennant, these are figures who have supplied the foundations. There are many more following in their footsteps. One of the features that makes it an indigenous literature is that these writers have not sought to interpret the Australian scene and the Australian people in terms of the English scene and the English people. Their characters speak and act normally against their own background; they do not posture and pose and talk blank verse. Just as it is impossible to render the strong Australian sunlight with the gentle brush of Corot, so it is impossible to tell of the Australian scene and character as Zola tells of the French character, Feuchtwanger of the German character, or Dickens of the English character. The fact that we speak the English language does not make us English; at the best we are only British.

Let there be no mistake. This is not a diatribe against England. I have lived in England and have a vast affection for the country. But we are concerned with examining the subservience of our writers to second-hand ideas and second-hand formulae of expression, and some honesty is needed.

"More New Zealand verse is rendered impossible by its hackneyed verbiage than from any other cause," declare W. F. Alexander and A. E. Currie in *New Zealand Verse*, published in 1906. The passage of thirty-odd years has not produced a great deal of evidence to suggest that this conclusion should be seriously modified, but once again we may look with pleasure to the fact that our poets are ceasing to find wooded glens, and dales, and copses, and nightingales in New Zealand, and are saying something individual about their own country.

That such a change should come about is inevitable. If no one had at any time fulminated against the fatuity of portraying New Zealand in terms of Shelley and Keats and Wordsworth, that change would still have come, for there is obviously a stage in the development of any country when a new generation will cease to have the intimate links of its parents with a former environment. There is obviously a stage—such as we have perceived long ago in America and can perceive strongly to-day in Australia—when our life takes on a pertinent meaning of its own, of sufficient individuality to make us pleased to participate in it and no longer wish it to be somewhere else. It is such a wish, disguised as it may be in a multitude of ways, that has encouraged many of our writers to render the New Zealand scene in terms of England. Yet I doubt if any of our writers to-day, even those who have been offenders on the count of interpretation, would deny that it is about time we became confident of our own individuality.

Imitation is necessary in the development of any writer's ability. As British people we can be justly proud of the fact that we have some kinship with English literary traditions. But imitation is serviceable only if we use it as a means of acquiring some form of expression of our own, not if we settle into an imitative groove and shy away from the breath of originality merely because it would take us away from the "Englishness" of our work. To recall Scholefield's words, a "want of individuality in treatment" has been a stumbling block.

We may, of course, claim some noted figures in contemporary literature as our own. Katherine Mansfield, Hector Bolitho, Merton Hodge, even, in a half-hearted fashion, Samuel Butler. We also have a claim to David Low and Eric Partridge, and to sundry other people who were born in New Zealand.

Whatever may be said on their behalf, these people are not New Zealanders in the sense of adding anything

substantial to the literary or artistic history of their own country. Their work has been done for other countries, and has become part of the artistic or literary history of those countries.

There is not space here, nor would it be to much point, to dilate at length on the many and varied ways in which life in New Zealand differs from that in England. It would, indeed, be simpler to remark on the similarities between those modes of life, than to detail the dissimilarities. Environmentally alone there is a vast difference. Our ways are less crowded, our gardens spacious, our horizons vast. We are people of wide spaces, of keen winds, of turbulent seas. We are of the Pacific, with its blue skies and towering white cumulus clouds, and the earth is not yet tamed beneath our feet.

Our ways are different from those of the northern hemisphere. Our Christmas is in summer; theirs in winter. No matter how desirable they may seem we have no intimacy with the Yule-log and the snow-covered carol singer. Our bush is greener, vaster, more silent than any English wood; our countryside less intimate; nearly always mountain ranges stand on the edge of our horizons, we know nothing of rolling downlands or of the misery of dank English fogs. We are not enclosed by the dun-coloured bricks of English cities, but are breathing fresh air and carrying freedom on our shoulders, away from the smoke-dust and hopeless streets of English slums.

Just as our environment is different so must be our modes of existence. We have no millionaires; our leisured class is negligible both intellectually and actually; our population is a working one and our standard of living is high; we are one of the greatest radio- and car-owning countries in the world; in much of our social development we are greatly envied in other nations.

It would indeed be strange if we found the English language as used in Great Britain adequate for all our

requirements in this country. From the earliest days, from about 1794 when the first whaling fleets arrived, the conditions of New Zealand have necessitated the finding of new words so that new concepts can be understood between man and man.

When the great American lexicographer, Noah Webster, wrote the following in an Introduction to his *Dictionary* of 1828, he stated a fact that is as true in its application to New Zealand as to America:

"Language is the expression of ideas; and if the people of one country cannot preserve an identity of ideas (with another country) they cannot retain an identity of language. Now, an identity of ideas depends materially upon a sameness of things or objects with which the people of the two countries are conversant. But in no two portions of the earth, remote from each other, can such identity be found. Even physical objects must be different."

If, again, we exchange the word "America" for "New Zealand" in the following quotation from *Lectures on the English Language*, delivered by George P. Marsh in New York in 1861, we will have the scene set out for us accurately:

"The English language in America is necessarily much affected by the multitude of new objects, processes and habits of life that qualify our material existence in this new world It is a trite observation that, though very few Americans speak as well as the educated classes of Englishmen, yet not only is the average of English used here, both in speaking and writing, better than that of the great mass of the English people, but there are fewer local peculiarities of form and articulation in America than Britain."

Few New Zealanders have been prepared to date to concede that their country has added anything notable to the English language. As far as slang and colloquialisms are concerned they accept the supposition—with as

much fervour as some have accepted the "more English than the English" view—that this country has developed nothing indigenous of her own, and that all the slang she uses has been imported from America.

Nothing could be further from the truth. In partnership with Australia—and it would be fatal to deny that cultural partnership—we have evolved many thousands of expressions that we may call our own. A vast number of them have attained currency throughout the English-speaking world; many hundreds are to be found in the pages of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. It is only the lamentable lack of knowledge of the majority of people on the subject that leads them to foster an implicit belief in their own lack of identity.

Quite apart from colloquial speech, for instance the use of such terms as **Enzedder** and **All Black** and **old identity** and **swagger**, we have only to consider the tremendous variety of our native flora and fauna and of the names we have given them, to realize that therein lies a considerable addition to the bulk of the English language. It is to be regretted that as yet no adequate dictionary of ready reference has been compiled concerning our flora and fauna, although some excellent research has been done on various aspects of the subject. A notable early work, which included a good deal of New Zealand material, was Professor E. E. Morris's *Austral English Dictionary*, published in 1898.

In this book I am concerned not with the factual record of natural phenomena, but with something that touches human beings more intimately. I am concerned with telling something of our indigenous colloquial speech, of the extraordinary variety and colour of it, of our habits of speech, and in what ways they differ from the English language of England.

Chapter II

THE BEGINNINGS

NEW ZEALAND'S early history has much in common with the beginnings in Australia. At the turn of the eighteenth century this country was no more than an adjunct to the colony of New South Wales. It was regarded as a suitable dumping ground for convicts. At one stage, we may recall, Governor Phillip recommended to the British Government that if convicts found guilty of capital offences were handed over to the New Zealand cannibals this would act as a greater deterrent to other convicts than mere hanging. A record of March 1, 1787, shows that Phillip was given the "power of exiling to New Zealand or the neighbouring islands any convict that may be condemned to death."

Escaped convicts from Australia in large numbers found refuge in New Zealand and were among the first white inhabitants of this country. As R. McNab remarks in *From Tasman to Marsden*, 1914 (p. 111), the first two white women in New Zealand were convicts.

Together with the whalers these fugitives formed the original white community in New Zealand, and it is a self-obvious fact that they were the type of people most inclined to use unorthodox English speech. Much of the vigour of present-day Australian slang has been inherited from the convicts and adventurers who were her first inhabitants. And so, although to a less degree, was the case with New Zealand. We should not allow wishful thinking to blind us to the facts of our history. J. Savage, author of *Some Account of New Zealand*, 1807, the first book written about this country, could not have been far wide of the mark when he referred to the whites in New Zealand as some of the "lowest profligates in Europe." When Thomas Chapman, a Rotorua mission-

ary, wrote in his *Journal** in 1831 that "our wicked countrymen" (i.e. Englishmen) were having a serious effect on the Maoris he was doubtless speaking the truth.

Charles Darwin, in the *Voyage of the Beagle*, December 30, 1835, says: "The greater part of the English (in New Zealand) are the very refuse of society"; and if we are to judge from comments by John Beecham, the Americans among the whaling fleets were not much better. In a letter dated February 26, 1838, published in *Remarks Upon the Latest Official Documents Relating to New Zealand* (printed by order of the House of Commons, 1838) Beecham remarks: "As the conduct of the American seamen is not superior to that of our own (the English), the evil which the natives suffer from that class of visitants becomes a very prominent feature . . ."

As further evidence of the character of our original white inhabitants, if such evidence is necessary, we may quote J. D. Lang in a letter to Earl Durham in 1839. He declares: "The resort of the South Sea whalers to the Bay of Islands, the existence of a considerable European population in the neighbourhood of the Bay, and the artificial wants of the natives, have led to the establishment of various reputable persons in the capacity of merchants or traders in that vicinity; as also to the settlement of a swarm of individuals from the two penal colonies (New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land) of a very different description, as retail dealers, grog-sellers, and panderers to the worst vices of the most abandoned of men." Lang adds that, "with a few honourable exceptions," the population of New Zealand at that time consisted of "the veriest refuse of civilised society"—escaped convicts, needy adventurers, runaway sailors from the whaling ships, and fraudulent debtors. Another writer† in 1839 declared that New Zealand "is quite an Elysium for the vagabond and swindler."

*MS. in Turnbull Library, Wellington.

†E. Campbell, *The Present State, Resources, and Prospects of New Zealand*, 1839.

These facts have been enumerated at length, not because we are likely to have any pride concerning such early inhabitants, but because it would be foolhardy to ignore them, especially when considering the evolution of indigenous speech. The undoubted influence of these people upon "pidgin" English in New Zealand and upon the incorporation of English terms in Maori speech, will be commented upon in a later chapter. For the present, it will be sufficient to look upon them as practitioners of unconventional English.

As has already been remarked, they would obviously be the type of people more inclined than any other to use slang. If there had been any refinement at all in their speech it would be more cause for surprised comment than if they had spoken but the lowest and crudest jargon of the seven seas. The latter was certainly the case.

Here is what E. J. Wakefield has to say in *Adventure in New Zealand*, 1845, in writing of the whaling fraternity: "Their whole language in fact is an argot, or slang, almost unintelligible to the stranger. . . . Every article of trade with the natives has its slang term in order that they may converse with each other respecting a purchase without initiating natives into their calculations."

Among the terms he lists are:

grunter , a pig;	heifer , a woman;
spuds , potatoes;	titter , a girl;
shooting stick , a gun;	squeaker , a child;
dust , gunpowder;	mob , a party of men.
spreader , a blanket;	

If we compare this list with English usage as contained in the *Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, by Eric Partridge, we find that only three, **grunter**, **squeaker**, and **titter**, were definitely in use in England before 1845. As Wakefield collected the terms in this country between 1839 and 1844, we are certainly entitled to note with interest the influence of our early inhabi-

tants upon slang, for even if these words were not used originally in this country—and however much we may believe them to be originally English there is no printed evidence to support that contention—the fact that Wakefield noted them in New Zealand is of considerable documentary importance.

In the case of the expression **spuds**, for instance, the first quotation given by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and also by Partridge, is 1860. Those authorities have combed carefully through English literature and records, so that the appearance and listing of the word in New Zealand by 1844 has decided interest.

Although a certain degree of doubt may be cast upon the origins of many of the terms noted by Wakefield above, there can be no doubt that whalers on the New Zealand coast were responsible for the emergence of many other expressions. Among them is **go-ashore**, an iron pot or cauldron, which generally had three iron feet and two ears from which it was suspended by a wire handle over a fire. The term was certainly in use before 1834, for in that year it is recorded by Edward Markham in his Diary, the MS. of which is in the Turnbull Library, Wellington. Markham's spelling is **go-on-shore**. A note concerning the evolution of this term is given by J. D. Lang in a letter to Earl Durham in 1839. He says: "The New Zealanders, observing that the sailors on board the whaling vessels that touched at their ports uniformly carried an iron pot with them to cook their provisions when they went on shore, conceived the words **go ashore**—which they were accustomed to hear when preparations were being made for landing—as the proper name for an iron pot and they have accordingly been generally adopted as such in the New Zealand (i.e. Maori) language."

When we find in *Narrative of a Voyage to New Zealand*, 1815, by J. L. Nicholas, that a young Maori woman was nicknamed **Mrs. Goshore** by the sailors—he suggests "a corruption of **go on shore**"—we may be reasonably certain that the term has a long history in New Zealand.

Various authorities, including Morris,* have suggested that **go-ashore** is a corruption of the Maori **kohua**, but the reverse was probably the case. V. Roberts, *Kohikohinga* (1929) makes no bones about the matter. He declares, forthrightly, p. 160: "The word **kohua**, interpreted as 'pot,' is as most people know a corruption of **go-ashore**, the old whalers' name for the three-legged iron pot which the Maoris so quickly adopted." The Maoris obviously had no name for an iron pot until it was introduced to this country by white men. However, the native **kohu**, to cook, must be taken into consideration, although this may possibly be no more than a corruption of the word **cook** itself. In their respective *Dictionaries* of the Maori language neither Williams nor Tregear have much light to throw on the derivation of either **kohua** or **kohu**. Tregear merely gives "**go-shore**, a round iron pot with three legs" without hazarding whether the Maori or English form was the original.

The now-obsolete word **tonguer** was also in use in the early 1830's, and very likely before, although I have discovered no written records of it prior to 1836. A **tonguer** was a native or white living in New Zealand who assisted a whaling crew to cut up whales and who also acted in the capacity of an interpreter. These men earned their name not from the act of interpreting, but from the fact that they were given the whale's carcass and tongue to dispose of as they wished. The first mention of the term that I have discovered is in the *Log* of the *Mary Mitchell*, April 28, 1836 (published in *Old Whaling Days*, 1913, by R. McNab). Subsequent early records are 1840, *Plain Truths*, by J. P. Johnson, and *Adventure in New Zealand*, 1844, by Wakefield.

Both **tonguer** and **go-ashore** have long since become obsolete, although they are still to be found in books on former days and are worth noting.

*Op. cit.

Another old whaling term—this time a pejorative—is **toe-rigger**, which is the original of the still-current slang expression in Australia, **toe-ragger**. Here is what the *Sydney Truth*, January 12, 1896, had to say on the subject: "The bushie's favourite term of opprobrium, a **toe-ragger**, is . . . probably from the Maori, amongst whom the nastiest term of contempt was that of **tau rika rika**, or slave. The old whalers on the Maoriland coast in their anger called each other **toe-riggers** and to-day the word in the form of **toe-ragger** has spread throughout the whole of the South Seas." Morris* also declares: "It is of Maori origin. Away from Maoriland **toe-rigger** had no meaning, and a false meaning and origin were given by the change of vowel."

The use of **copper Maori** for a native oven is also of whaling vintage. The suggested origin is **kopa**, a native oven, or **kapura**, a fire, but it is possible that the former is nothing more than a Maori corruption of the word **copper** itself. The expression is recorded by E. Markham in his *Diary*,* 1834.

It is not generally realized that the term **beachcomber** is possibly of New Zealand origin. The first English quotation given by the *Oxford Dictionary* is 1847. E. J. Wakefield* had, however, noted it in this country before 1844. An even earlier form, **beach ranger**, apparently formed on the Australian **bushranger**, which was current by 1806, is recorded by A. Earle, *Narrative of a Nine Months' Residence in New Zealand*, in 1827. While **beach ranger** has certainly become obsolete, the same cannot be said of **beachcomber**, which is known throughout the entire English-speaking world. With so many vagabonds living in this country in the early days there was certainly ample reason for its use in New Zealand.

In passing, the term **bush** is worthy of mention, particularly since it was destined to do great service in subsequent days. It was used in New Zealand almost

*Op. cit.

as soon as in Australia, one of the first uses in this country being in a letter dated January 6, 1810, written by Alexander Berry from the Bay of Islands. (See McNab's *Historical Records of New Zealand*.) As was the case in Australia, early writers clung rather erratically to the terms **woods**, **forest**, and **brush** to describe the trees of the two countries, but after the first decade of the nineteenth century **bush** seems to have become fairly well established, although in New Zealand it has continued to battle with **forest** even up to present times. Only recently a well-known Dominion writer told me that he had been reproved for using **bush** in preference to **forest**, which is evidence that the matter has not yet been finally decided in this country. Writing in *New Zealand, After Fifty Years*, 1889, E. Wakefield declares: "In New Zealand **bush** always means forest, and large forest. . . . The word has a quite different meaning in Australia. There it merely means 'the country' and is often applied to tracts of open land without any trees on at all." Such is certainly the case. I have also heard the term **bush** used to describe the suburbs of a large city, while as long ago as 1885 Mrs. C. Praed, in her *Australian Life*, applied **bushed** (i.e. lost in the bush) to a person who had lost his way in the confusion of London's streets. There are several dozen derivatives from the term commonly used both in New Zealand and Australia, amongst the more interesting being **bush road**, **bush-whacker**, **bush track**, **bushman**, **bushlife**, **bush telegraph**, **bush baptist**, **bush lawyer**, and **go bush**. New Zealand originals include **bush-cutter** and **bush-cutting** (both used before 1863), and **bush fighting**, applied to the Maori wars.

To the original white inhabitants of this country we owe the early currency of **pakeha** and **Maori**, which may be regarded as two of the most important terms New Zealand has contributed to the English language. Both have involved histories chockful of interest to the student of language. There are, for instance, at least six

theories as to the origin of **pakeha**, none of which may be regarded as finally conclusive. The use of **pakeha** for a white man certainly dates from before 1815, and in an adjectival sense, **pakeha Maori**, **pakeha customs**, etc., to before 1840. How the word came into being is highly problematical. Briefly, the current theories may be given as follows:

- (a) From **pakepakeha**, "imaginary beings of evil influence." Suggested by Williams in his *Maori Dictionary*.
- (b) From **Pakehakeha**, one of the "gods of the sea."
- (c) From the Hebrew adjective **kehah**, pale or dim, in conjunction with the Maori causative **pa**.
- (d) From **keha**, a flea (the common flea was introduced to New Zealand by Europeans), together with the causative **pa**.
- (e) From **poaka**, a pig (pigs were also introduced by Europeans).
- (f) From the expression **b - - - you!**

I am personally in favour of the "flea" or "pig" explanations, but the only one which I feel should be scouted entirely is the last. Unfortunately, like a good many things that appeal to popular imagination at the expense of common sense, it will probably die hardly.

Pakeha can be used with agreeable flexibility both as a singular and plural noun, though **pakehas** is more general for the plural. In passing, the colloquial uses of **pake-has** (the **has** being accented), for a wealthy white man, and **pake-hasn't**, for a penniless white, may be noted.

The noun **Maori** is another term which could not have come into being if this country had been left undis-

covered, for, prior to the arrival of the whaling fleets, the natives did not call themselves **Maoris** nor did they call their language **Maori**, since the nearest approach they had to that term was an adjective meaning "native," "indigenous" or "common." When the natives described themselves as **tangata maori** that expression signified no more than the ordinary common inhabitants of the country in contrast to the newcomers, and it was merely a quirk of English misunderstanding that resulted in the adjective **maori** being changed into a noun. This change took place before 1815. While **Maori** was destined to become a noun of great significance in this country, it should be remarked that **kanaka**, which is only another form of **tangata**, a human being, has become current throughout the whole of the Pacific for a Polynesian native.

In spite of the fairly early origins of both **pakeha** and **maori** the fact that they were used in colloquial fashion by the whalers and other vagabonds in this country before 1840 was probably a leading factor in preventing their more speedy adoption into general English speech. For instance we find, even up to 1880 and later, a general tendency to use the expressions "natives," "aboriginals," "aborigines," and "New Zealanders" for the Maoris, and to refer to the European population as "white inhabitants," as though they had no stable claim to belong to New Zealand. We should not ignore this fact in judging our literary yesterdays. Since it was impossible for whites to be "New Zealanders" in common parlance without being mistaken for Maoris, and since it was equally impossible for them to describe themselves as "natives" of the country, it was obvious that they should feel something less of the proprietorship that Australians had in their own country. Not only was Australia a much vaster country, but its aboriginals were slaughtered with much greater abandon, and, moreover, the native intelligence was not high. There was accordingly little confusion when a white

inhabitant of our sister Dominion called himself an "Australian" or a "native" of the country. The earliest example I have been able to find of "New Zealander" being applied to a white is 1879, by A. Bathgate in *Colonial Experiences*. "Native" was not used similarly until the 1890's. In the 1898 edition of his *Dictionary* Webster distinguishes between an "**Australian native**, a British subject born in Australia, but not one of the aborigines" and a "**New Zealand native**, a British subject born in New Zealand, whether a white man or a Maori." The high intelligence of the Maori has allowed him to keep a rightful place in the community which the Australian aborigine has never earned. The Maori is no less a New Zealander than are we. It is only the numerical preponderance of the white population that has given us the sense that we are possessors of, not merely partners in, this country.

The term **New Zealander** itself is worthy of comment. Applied, of course, to a native (it is anachronistic to speak of **Maoris** before 1815) it was first used by Captain Cook in his *Journal* of March 1770. Slightly earlier (1769) P. Monneron has used the French version **Zelandais** in *Journal of the Voyage of the St. Jean Baptiste* (de Surville). Doubtless because of this French influence we find the natives frequently described as **Zealanders** in early documents.

Since it bears on the subject we may note that **New Zealander** was first applied to a person of other than native origin about 1837. In a Sydney Press quotation of December in that year, quoted on p. 167 in *Old Whaling Days*, by R. McNab, it is used to describe a European attached to a New Zealand whaling station. This is scarcely an accurate rendering of the term, though it is of interest.

While the expressions **Enzedder** and **Pig-islander** do not make their appearance until considerably later in the picture, the use of the initials **N.Z.** for this country has

a long history. One of the first instances I have discovered is in a letter by Lieut.-Governor P. G. King, dated November 9, 1793, wherein he refers to "**N.Z.'d curiosities.**" By the 1820's the abbreviation was in frequent use, as was the now-obsolete form **N. Zealand**.

To return to the early white inhabitants of this country, we have good evidence to prove that from the beginning of last century there was a close association between the colloquial speech of Australia and New Zealand. It was for this reason that, after the beginning of large-scale immigration in 1840, many Australian terms came swiftly into use in this country, such as **stock-yard, stock-farming, stockman, stock-holder, run, station, and squat**. In a subsequent chapter I will refer in detail to the vast number of borrowings we have made from Australia. At the moment it is sufficient to mention only the use of **boys**, which as E. J. Wakefield stated in the *New Zealand Gazette* of May 9, 1840, was used for "native attendants" as they were "always styled by both natives and white men," and **blackfellow**. The use of this is now standard in Australia as also is **whitefellow**. Both are derived from aboriginal pidgin in which the intrusive "fellow" makes a frequent appearance. In his *History of New Zealand*, of 1859, A. S. Thomson recalls that **blackfellow** was "a term frequently applied to the natives" in New Zealand in the early days. Like **nigger** and **darkey**, of which we may find a few unwarranted uses in our literary records, **blackfellow** is obsolete in this country for the good reason that it could not be applied with justice or with reason to our fine native race.

Mere was one of many native words to be corrupted by the whites. In colloquial speech it became **a maryl**. The writer J. C. Bidwill alludes in 1840 to "green stone **maries**, as the whites call them."

In modern times the pronunciation **souple-jack** for **supple-jack** has been roundly condemned by many of our purists. As the former version was recorded as long ago as 1834 by Edward Markham in his *Diary* we may take

heart that precedent has been long established, and that if New Zealanders prefer to say **souple-jack** it is unlikely that we will be able to alter the usage any more than the American will surrender the pronunciation **derby** for the original English **darby**.

In his *Austral English Dictionary* Professor Morris lists the use of **cowdie** as a slovenly rendering of **kauri**. He did not realize that it was in common English use long before 1820 and that it is so rendered in numerous official documents. The early inhabitants of this country found considerable difficulty in mastering the Maori use of "r". As a result we find that our earliest record of the word Maori itself is **maoude**, that **rangatira** is rendered as **rangateeda**, **haeremai**, **he-i-de-mai**, and that **kauri** becomes **cowdie**, etc. In a later chapter reference will be made to other perversions of Maori speech. Suffice to say that, although **cowdie** is on the wane, it is still to be heard in New Zealand, just as are **bungy** and **bunger** for **ponga**, which also date from early days.

Before we leave the whalers, mention should be made of the anglicized use of **whare** for a small house or hut. For instance, the writer of Letter No. 48 in *Letters from Settlers and Labouring Emigrants*, published in 1842, records that houses and shanties occupied by white men "are generally called by the native name," which he renders **warries**. Until the end of last century writers seem to have had some considerable difficulty in making up their minds how the term should be spelt. Here is a selection of the renderings: **e-whar-re**, 1796; **wurrie**, 1807; **warree**, 1817; **waré**, 1820; **warry**, 1841 (these were merely records of the native use); **warré**, 1854; **wharry**, 1871; **wharè**, 1889; **whare**, 1902 (all anglicized uses).

The term **futter** has been frequently recorded in print for a storehouse on posts, even for a store-shed on a farm. It is a corruption of the Maori **whata**. The version **wutter** is given by E. Markham in 1834. It is stated that **futter** is still in use among some of the old settlers of this country. **Watty** has also been recorded.

We have to thank our original inhabitants for specifying, inaccurately as might be expected, the expression **to rub noses** as the equivalent of the Maori ceremony known as **hongī**. (The nose is pressed, not rubbed.) The expression is to be found, for instance, in Markham's *Diary*. At an earlier date, Governor King had alluded to "joining noses," which is nearer the mark. However, in modern colloquial speech we find that **to rub noses** is used loosely for (a) to greet (a person), (b) to kiss (someone), (c) to plunge into a private conversation with heads close together. On the other hand, we find that **to rub noses** has been abbreviated to the bald verb, **to nose**, all of which cast some interesting light on the manner in which language grows.

Chapter III

LANDTAKERS

WITH the advent of many settlers after 1840 it was obvious that the word-making process should be speeded up, and for that reason we find in the next twenty years a plentiful variety of material. It was in these days, at least so far as may be judged from textual evidence, that **hoot** first came into general currency as a synonym for money or cash. This is probably one of the best-known of all New Zealand's slang terms. Derived from the Maori **utu**, which was used in an altogether different sense originally, **hoot** quickly passed into general use because it fell into the exact niche where it was needed in trade and business operations between native and white. In its original Maori form **utu** meant revenge exacted in blood, a form of "paying-out" for some offence, and we would doubtless be justified in supposing that the corrupted version **hoot** was used by the pre-1840 white inhabitants. The fact that G. L. Craik records the spelling **hootoo** in *The New Zealanders*, published in 1830, is partial support for this contention. Whether this was so or not, the term was certainly current in the 1850's, as witness the poem quoted by J. Barr in *The Old Identities*, p. 333. Since that time it has seen yeoman service.

The following, by a writer in the *Sydney Truth* of January 12, 1896, is of interest: "There are several specimens of bush slang transplanted from the Maori language. **Hoot** is a very frequent synonym for money or wage. I have heard a shearer at the Pastoralist Union office in Sydney when he sought to ascertain the scale of remuneration, enquire of the gilt-edged clerk behind the barrier 'What's the hoot, mate?' The Maori equivalent for money is **utu**, pronounced by the Ngapuhi and other

northern tribes with the last syllable clipped, and the word is very largely used by the kauri-gum diggers and station hands in the North Island. The original meaning of **utu** in Maori is 'revenge'. When the missionaries first settled in New Zealand they found that the savage inhabitants had no conception of any recompense except the grim recompense of blood. Under Christianizing influences the natives were induced to forego the blood-revenge for injuries, on receiving a solatium in goods or land, and so **utu** came to have the double meaning of revenge and recompense, and eventually became recognized as the Maori word for money."

Another term that possibly overlapped from the pre-1840 period was **jimmygrant**, for an immigrant. It has hitherto been supposed that this example of rhyming slang was of Australian origin, but I have failed to find any earlier record than in Wakefield's *Adventure in New Zealand*, published in 1845. Wakefield speaks of a **lubber** of a **jimmygrant** and also of **jimmygrants** as the equivalent of "emigrants." This, however, is obviously an error for "immigrants." It is not until 1859 that we find any record of the term in Australia, and then it is in the abbreviated form **Jimmy**. It is popularly believed that the term **pommy** for an Englishman is a direct descendant of **jimmygrant**, via **jimmy-granate**, **pomegranate**, to **pommy**.

Although it verges on "pidgin" the expression **wiwi** (from **oui oui**) for a Frenchman is also original to New Zealand. It was recorded by R. G. Jameson in *New Zealand, South Australia and New South Wales*, in 1842, and by Wakefield a few years later. A secondary meaning, which makes itself plain in the quotation, is recorded in Letter No. 32, *Letters from Settlers and Labouring Emigrants*, 1841. Herein the version **we-we** is used of French and American sailors, the comment being added "They are too much **the we-we**, viz., they are very covetous." In both senses the term is a contribution to New Zealand colloquial speech.

The writer Jameson mentioned above was also the first I have discovered to give the word **cadet** the meaning of an inexperienced young man learning sheep-farming in New Zealand. It is the equivalent of the Australian **jackeroo**. Jameson alludes both to **colonial cadets** and **cadetships**. The term has long since passed into standard use in this country. Like the New Zealand application, dating from 1939, of **echelon** to a division of an Expeditionary Force, it represents a new meaning applied to an old term and is accordingly of considerable interest.

With the opening up of new land in this country, especially on the spacious Canterbury plains, a host of new expressions came into being, among them the **Canterbury Pilgrims**, **shagroons**, **prophets**, **Pre-Adamites**, **v-hut**, **gridironing**, and **spotting**. It is worth while to examine the meanings of these words since they are now nearly all obsolete.

The literary allusion in **Canterbury Pilgrims** is both obvious and apposite. In most of its early uses, however, we find it shortened to **Pilgrims**. One of the first records of it is in the *New Zealand Spectator* of May 7, 1851.

That our early settlers were not the dull unimaginative folk that has frequently been supposed is borne out by an interesting note in Thomson's *History of New Zealand*, in which he points out that the settlers in each of the provinces had nicknames, all providing amusing comments on the character of those pioneers. He writes: "There was an Auckland **cove**, a Wellington **swell**, a Nelson **snob**, a Taranaki **exquisite**, an Otago **cockney**, and a Canterbury **pilgrim**." Here is some excellent evidence to support H. L. Mencken's view that slang "not only provides new names for a series of everyday concepts, some new and some old; it also says something about them."

In a letter from John Robert Godley to his father on March 12, 1850 (MS. in the Turnbull Library), the term **shagroon** is carefully defined as "one of the retired

whalers who have married Maori wives." If this were true it would be the equivalent of **pakeha maori** in one of its early senses. However, we find an altogether different meaning given a little later when the term was applied to the Australian squatters who invaded Canterbury in 1851-52. Morris* notes: "The men who came from England were called **Pilgrims**, all others **shagroons**; probably a modification of the Irish word **shaughraun**."

According to L. G. D. Acland, who compiled an interesting *Sheep Station Glossary* some years ago,† the term **prophets** was also applied to the Australian squatters who came to Canterbury in 1851 "because they prophesied ruin for the farming **pilgrims**." Acland also lists **Pre-Adamite** as "an old nickname for the families who arrived in Canterbury before the settlement." No explanation as to its origin is offered.

Another term which found its way into common use about this time was **mana**, in its senses of power, authority or prestige. So general has been the anglicized use of this term in New Zealand that many people in this country believe it to be in common use throughout the English-speaking world. Such is not the case. The word admittedly occurs not only in the Maori, but in the Tahitian, Hawaiian, Rarotongan, Marquesan, Margevan and Samoan dialects, but New Zealand is the only country in the world in which **mana** has been adopted into common speech. It is occasionally used by writers on anthropology or primitive religion outside New Zealand, but beyond this it is not current abroad. It is one of our most serviceable terms and like **tapu** and **tapued** can be used with many shades of meaning, which no single English word could convey so aptly. One of its earliest anglicized uses is in *Te Ika a Maui*, 1855, by R. Taylor.

The colloquial use of **kai** for food in general, especially for a meal, was also well-established and had already

*Op. cit.

†Published in the *Christchurch Press*, 1933-34.

done good service before 1840. Food being a subject of prime importance between white and native, it was only natural that it should have been borrowed from Maori speech. In early records the "pidgin" forms **kaikai** or **kiki** are often discovered and even such a perverted expression as **kiki-ing** for eating appears in E. Markham's *Diary*, 1834.

About the middle of last century **Aotearoa** was anglicized as a name for New Zealand. Meaning "the long white cloud," it was reputedly the original Maori name given to this country, or more strictly to the North Island.

Among the problems our early pioneers had to tackle was that of the Englishman who purchased land in New Zealand, but who did not remain in this country to work his property—in numerous cases he bought land without coming out at all. This practice was resented by the settlers on the spot, who were anxious to clear their lands and open up roads, since it was obviously difficult to deal with men 12,000 miles away. **Absenteeism**, recorded by G. B. Earp in *New Zealand, Its Emigration and Gold-fields*, 1853, was the term used to describe the practice, and a New Zealand landowner living in England was described as an **absentee**.

Another practice which aroused resentment among settlers was **grid-ironing**. Land was purchased in strips, after the fashion of a gridiron, so that the intervening land was rendered useless to another prospective settler and might be bought at the **gridironer's** leisure. This practice seems to have been confined mainly to Canterbury; at least that was the source of the term, for, as Morris notes, "in other provinces free-selection was only allowed after survey."

An expression almost synonymous with **gridironing** was **spotting**, which was used to describe the practice adopted by wealthy settlers in choosing the best land for their stations at the expense of other people. **Spotting** was applied to provinces other than Canterbury, how-

ever. It was probably formed on the basis of the Australian terms **pick the eyes out of the country** and **pea-cocking**. In her *Travels and Adventures*, Vol. 2, Mrs. Muter records the New Zealand use of the verb **to spot** land.

These were some of the least of the worries of early settlers. They had a raw new land before them, untamed, unbroken, and as they pushed out into the remote parts of the country, leaving behind them the thin trickle of civilization that ran in the coastal towns, they faced a future that was to repay them with bitternesses as well as sweets. But having gone out to break new land with their bare hands and sinews, they could look with a trace of ironical contempt on others who came after them and who had yet to find their feet in the new world of the south. **To eat toot** was the pioneer way of describing the period during which new immigrants settled down to the cold facts of New Zealand life. More correctly the expression was **to eat tutu**, for it was from the poisonous plant of that Maori name that the phrase was taken. The following quotation from R. B. Paul's *Letters from Canterbury*, 1857, is explanatory: "Those who have come out in the last two or three ships have, I am told (with a few discreditable exceptions) passed with unprecedented rapidity through the crises of unreasonableness, false pride and grumbling which old settlers call **eating their tutu**."

Stock which ate **tutu** were said to be **tooted** (the correct spelling would be **tutued**), and it was from this use that the colloquial **eat one's toot** developed. According to A. Bathgate, *Colonial Experiences*, 1874, a sheep that lost its gregarious habits after eating **tutu** was called a **hermit**. An alternative expression was a **placer**, although this latter word was applied generally to a sheep that attached itself to a certain spot. **Placers** are often lambs whose mothers have died and who have transferred their affection from her to some object, such as a bush or stone. Both **placer** and **hermit** are still current among New Zealand shepherds.

Chapter IV

GOLD

IF the years between 1840 and 1860 had been prolific in the growth of new expressions, it is obvious that the succeeding twenty years must have much more to offer. The fact that hundreds of New Zealand and Australian expressions have come from the country serves to show us that it is not only in "crowding and excitement and artificial life"—to use the words of J. C. Hotten, the noted English lexicographer—that new terms find their way into popular speech. It is obvious, of course, that the larger the congregations of people the greater the impetus to evolve slang. The late 1850's brought the discovery of gold to New Zealand and with it a sudden growth of population. It is to be expected that the period should have given us many new expressions.

The finding of gold brought **diggers** and **diggings**, **speeking**, **nuggeting**, **dryblowing**, **surfacing**, and **fossick-ing**. It meant that the inhabitants of New Zealand should learn something of the **miner's right**, of **colour**, of the **hatter** (the miner who works alone), of **shanties** or rough public houses, even of **bushrangers**. Gold-fields brought the **reefer**, the **deep lead**, the **gutter**, the **monkey shaft**. Gold meant that people were itching to travel to the fields and to travel fast. It brought Cobb and Co. from Australia and the jargon of the stage-coach drivers. It brought **remittance men** and vagabonds, it brought prosperity and vice, it brought new towns and business, banks and shops. Just as Australia had been awakened from the twilight of early pioneering by the discovery of gold a few years earlier, so was New Zealand awakened, a little rudely perhaps, but she was awakened.

The literary records of those days are rich with slang, but so closely are we associated with Australia that it

is often difficult to decide in which country certain terms originated. The word **paddock**, for instance, was used to describe a place built near the mouth of a mining shaft where quartz or wash-dirt was stored. One imagines that it would be Australian in origin, but the first printed record we have of it is in Otago in 1862. So also with the term **shanty** for a public house or sly-grog shop, and with **accommodation house**, for a place where lodgings could be obtained by travellers in the country. All these terms, and many others, are to be found in a little booklet entitled *Otago, Its Goldfields and Resources*, published early in 1862.

If the reader declines to believe that these expressions and others listed below are of New Zealand origin he must at least concede to early writers in this country a keener ear in some cases than their fellows in Australia a decade before.

Strictly native to this Dominion is the expression **old identity**. So long has it been current that it is now accepted as part of standard speech in this country as well as in Australia and, since some confusion exists as to its origin, it would be well to put the matter straight. As is well known an **old identity** is a person of long standing and of note in a community. The term is often abbreviated to **identity**, and to New Zealanders it still has the specified meaning given above.

The erroneous statement appears both in the *Oxford Dictionary* and in Morris's *Dictionary* that **old identity** was originated by the song-writer Charles R. Thatcher in Dunedin in 1862. In actual fact it was current before this date. For instance, the anonymous writer of *Otago, Its Goldfields and Resources*, of 1862, declares that "the exclusive spirit of the old identity" was part of the curse of Dunedin. Some light is cast on the origin by A. Bathgate in *Colonial Experiences*, 1874. He remarks that "it was a name applied by the people of Victoria, who flocked hither (to Otago) in thousands on the

discovery of gold, to those who had been in the province before that time." He continues: "It took its origin from an expression in a speech made by one of the members of the Provincial Council, Mr. E. B. Cargill, who, in speaking of the new arrivals, said that the early settlers should endeavour to preserve their old identity."

The expression swiftly became popular, and the songwriter Thatcher probably assisted in increasing this popularity. Bathgate adds the comment: "A comic singer helped to perpetuate the name by writing a song." This singer was certainly Thatcher.

But **old identity** was not applied only to residents of long standing. It was used to describe anything effete and, when the gold-miners found that the fish barracouta was served with monotonous regularity in boarding houses and hotels they called it **the old identity** also. In 1879 J. Barr wrote a book entitled *The Old Identities*, and in the same year an "**Old Identities Hotel**" was erected in Wellington to commemorate early settlers.

As a contrast to this term for old inhabitants of any place, **new iniquity** was concocted to describe newcomers to Otago. It is possible that Thatcher was responsible for this word. Bathgate notes it in 1874 and five years later Barr alludes to **Victorian iniquities**. To-day it has long been obsolete, but its partner **old identity** will doubtless survive for many years.

In passing it is worth while to note that Barr (*supra*) also employs the expression **barracoutian** for a person. In view of the gold-diggers' use of **old identity** for the fish, it seems highly probable that **barracoutian** was, by the process of transference and inversion, used as an alternative slang expression for an **old identity**.

Few colonial writers of the middle of last century have applied themselves more assiduously to the use of Australian and New Zealand slang than the humourist Thatcher mentioned above. In a slender volume entitled *The Canterbury Songster*, published in 1862, he gives us

the first use of that now popular phrase **to be a shingle short**, silly or crazy. This was a version of the Australian **to have a shingle short** of which there is one previous record, in 1852. He also uses **to give** (someone) **a rap**, to reprove a person, and provides the earliest printed record in New Zealand of such terms as **nobbler**, a drink, and **a down on** (someone), a grudge against a person.

Another prolific user of slang was C. L. Money, whose interesting book *Knocking About in New Zealand* was published in 1871 with an introduction by the noted Australian writer Marcus Clarke. In this volume is to be found the first printed record of **the strength of a matter**, i.e. the real facts, the inside information, which has become highly popular throughout both New Zealand and Australia. He also uses **doubler** for "two lots of grog" at one time, which had not been recorded before, and reveals that such expressions as **beggars-on-the-coals**, small dampers; **duffer**, a worthless mine; **to tail**, to follow or watch; **blowing**, for boasting; **swag**, **tucker**, **to cooe**, **old chum** and **new chum**, amongst many other terms, were current in New Zealand at the time.

Bathgate in his *Colonial Experiences* of 1874 acquaints us with the New Zealand expression **paper-collared swells**, for what are now generally referred to as white-collar men. Among the many expressions he notes are **billy**, **old hands**, **John Chinaman** and **John** (Chinese), **cockatoo** (a farmer, from which **cocky** is derived), **swagsman** (later **swagman**), and **a shout** (a free drink).

Another important term made its appearance during this period. It was **Maori land**, which has become a standard expression to-day. It was used by F. E. Maning in *Old New Zealand*, published in 1863. Hitherto it has been commonly supposed that this expression was originated by the *Bulletin*, Sydney, after 1880. The *Bulletin* certainly uses the initials **M.L.** to signify New Zealand, and may possibly have used the derivative **Maorilander** for a New Zealander, originally, although this is to be doubted.

It was Maning (*supra*) who also introduced us to the verb **to Maorify**, to infuse with or influence by Maori elements, which has found currency among other writers.

No review of the 1860-80 period would be complete without a reference to those once-important political terms **abolitionists** and **provincialists**, names of opposing parties or sections of the New Zealand people who battled so angrily for and against the abolition of the system of provincial government. This abolition was achieved in 1876.

New Zealand is unfortunate in not possessing more comprehensive literary records to cover the period up to 1880. What has been given in this chapter is certainly little more than a fragment of the material that must have been available at that time if there had been more writers of the calibre of Barr, Maning and Bathgate to record it. We have only to examine the large number of indigenous expressions that were certainly current before the end of the century to realize that they must have been in use many years before and it is only lack of printed records that prevents our being more definite on the point. A work such as *Canterbury Rhymes*, 1883, edited by W. P. Reeves, is of especial value for it provides us with some records of documentary importance. In this little volume evidence is to be found showing that **bell-topper**, a silk top-hat, was used in New Zealand in 1853, seven years before we have a record of it in Australia. **Super**, a station manager or overseer, and **to knock down** money, to spend lavishly, were also current here in 1853, and there is no earlier Australian record of them.

Chapter V

THE INHERITORS

THE fact that little comment on the use of slang in New Zealand was made by early writers does not prove that a considerable bulk of it was not current here. As has been shown in preceding chapters the scope of our indigenous expressions in use before 1880 was certainly wide, and it could have been only the wishful thinking of the "more English than the English" advocates, coupled with poor observation, that blinded the majority of writers to the evidence about them. Even as late as 1898 an author of the standing of W. Pember Reeves was content to declare blandly that the slang used in New Zealand "is almost wholly a mixture of English, American, and Australian."

To refute such a statement it is sufficient to remark that expert observers of the language of New Zealand and Australia had, long before this date, realized that both countries had already developed important lingual characteristics of their own.

As early as 1829 we find Edward Gibbon Wakefield writing in a *Letter from Sydney* that slang and cant were used "as a matter of course everywhere from the gaols to the vice-roy's palace, not excepting the Bar and the Bench." The opinion that the language used by the New Zealand whalers was "an argot or slang almost unintelligible to a stranger" has already been quoted from E. J. Wakefield's *Adventure in New Zealand* of 1845.

The subsequent effect of these beginnings was likely to be considerable. By 1883, R. E. N. Twopeny, author of *Town Life in Australia*, is declaring that there is "room for a very interesting dictionary" of terms used in the antipodes. That there were other observers as equally convinced as was Twopeny of the variety of

material waiting to be collected is shown by the fact that in 1891 an important record was published by a German named Dr. Karl Lentzner entitled *Wörterbuch der Englischen Volkssprachen Australiens*. This is one of our first Australasian dictionaries, an interesting though incomplete work which has proved of value to subsequent investigators. There was little of the New Zealand element included in the dictionary, however, for Lentzner did not visit these islands; but when he speaks of the "rich and racy slang of the fifth continent—the mighty Australian commonwealth of the future"—we may feel reasonably sure that he included this country in his consideration. If he did not, Professor Edward E. Morris, the Australian scholar who was later to publish an important collection of *Austral English*, certainly did so, for in 1892 Morris declared to a Hobart meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science:

"A body like this section, composed of men from different parts of scattered colonies (Australia and New Zealand), might render valuable help in organizing the work of collecting authorities for our various peculiar words and usages. Twenty or thirty men and women, each undertaking to read certain books with a new dictionary in mind, and to note in a prescribed fashion what is peculiar, could accomplish all that is needed."

At first it might seem, continued Morris, that the bulk of words indigenous to Australia and New Zealand were few and that, in the hundred years of colonial history, few special usages had arisen. "But a man with a philological turn of mind, who notes what he hears, will soon find the list grow. Some philologists speak, not perhaps very satisfactorily, of being 'at the fountains of language': we can all of us testify to the birth of some words within our own memory, but the origin of these, if not noted, will in time be lost. There are many words which the strictest cannot condemn as slang, though even slang, being the speech of the people, is not undeserving of some scientific study: words, for instance, which have

come into the language from the natives, and names of animals, shrubs, and flowers. It might even be possible, with sufficient co-operation, to produce an Australian dictionary on the same lines as the *New English Dictionary* by way of supplement to it."

The great Dr. Murray, to whose brilliant scholarship and foresight the *Oxford English Dictionary* will stand as a lasting monument, had realized even before this time that New Zealand and Australia had material to offer which would be worthy of inclusion in his work. Many examples were contributed to Murray by Professor Morris, but the latter's suggestion at Hobart, quoted above, was not carried out. It is clear that most Australians, like New Zealanders, had little consciousness of novelty in their own language. Observers overseas, on the other side of the world, seemed more concerned about it. Dr. Lentzner's *Dictionary* was published in Leipzig; a good deal of his work was included in the *Dictionary of Slang* published in England in 1897 by Barrère and Leland. Messrs. Funk and Wagnall, New York, included many Australian terms in their *Standard Dictionary* of the 1890's. A special Australasian supplement was included in the 1898 edition of Webster's *International Dictionary*—as is well known this is an American publication—and, finally, Professor Morris's own *Dictionary*, which to-day remains a valuable source of reference, was published in London.

Even though these works are incomplete in their study of colloquial speech—Morris's *Austral English*, which is undoubtedly the most comprehensive of all of them, contains only some 300 slang terms—they provide a decidedly interesting commentary on the Australasian development of popular language which to-day includes many thousands of expressions of extraordinary vigour and variety. All the observers mentioned above, including Morris, missed a great deal of material in their researches as I have discovered by close study of the documentary records of our two countries. Not only were hundreds of

interesting expressions missed, which to-day have become part of the living texture of our speech, but many shades of meaning were overlooked.

To take a simple and even somewhat colourless example: **crawler**, in standard English use "that which crawls," was listed by Morris in its rural application to slow-moving and peaceable cattle. I have found at least eight different uses for the term before 1895—applied to renegade convicts and incompetent workers, used as a pejorative, tacked on to shepherds and sheep, etc. A New Zealand use of the word for "a man subservient to the boss" has been noted by L. G. D. Acland in his *Sheep Station Glossary*.

It was not without good reason therefore that the publishers of Webster's *Dictionary* of 1898 should declare in an Introductory Note to the Australasian Supplement: "The latest great expansion of the English stock (i.e. language) has been in Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, where new conditions of nature and society have produced a multitude of new verbal usages." Unfortunately, from the documentary point of view, this Supplement contained only some 700-odd Australasian terms, but the compilers note that it "might easily have been doubled in size" and that "slang words have been very sparingly admitted."

What was the reason for this outburst of word-making exuberance in New Zealand and Australia? Perhaps we might let Eric Partridge, the English slang expert, himself a New Zealander, give an answer. Writing of our colloquial speech in his *Slang, To-day and Yesterday* he notes "its force and picturesqueness, its richness and variety, qualities due in part to the exhilarating and often romantic occupation" of our countries "and in part to the intrepidity and resourcefulness of the early settlers and to the continued need for those moral assets as well as the persisting exhilaration."

But it was even more than this. It rested in the necessity imposed upon our pioneers to find terms that would suit their new environment.

"These eccentric forms of expression," says Lentzner in 1891, "are for the most part of modern origin, invented because they were absolutely needed, or because they expressed some idea more ingeniously, sententiously and amusingly than others had done."

Herein lies one of the great truths of lingual development. It is not only in great cities or in the restless brains of journalists that slang is concocted; it grows inevitably wherever man sets his feet, wherever men gather together, and wherever new forms of life are imposed on old.

When, therefore, we find W. Pember Reeves declaring in *The Long White Cloud*, 1898, from which a quotation has already been made, that "many good words in daily use in rural England have been dropped in the colony" he is stating an inevitable and self-obvious fact. Not only did our southern environment and unique conditions of life render necessary the development of new terms, but it likewise resulted in numerous English words being discarded from use. "Brook, village, moor, heath, dale, copse, meadow, and glade" are some of the English expressions which Reeves noted had ceased to have currency in New Zealand. The loss was also noted in the Commonwealth. For instance, Professor W. K. Hancock, author of *Australia*, 1930, remarks that the Australian vocabulary (and this applies with equal accuracy to the New Zealand vocabulary) "is smaller and simpler than the vocabulary of middle-class Englishmen, for Australia does not tolerate forms of thought and expression (such as irony) which are perplexing and offensive to the average man; and has also rejected, almost at a blow, the beautiful names of an intimate countryside—fields and meadows, woods, copse, spinney and thicket, dale, glen, vale and coomb, brook, stream and rivulet, inn and

village." In their place, Hancock adds, there is the Bush and the new vocabulary of the Bush.

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With these facts in mind, and they have been set out in some detail in order to give a proper perspective, it is possible to regard the vast number and variety of colloquial expressions recorded in the closing twenty years of last century not simply as some sudden flourishing outburst that emanated from nowhere, but as the cumulative result of the word-making obligation imposed by new conditions of life in the antipodes on previous generations. To examine in detail the many hundreds of new terms of which we have printed records in Australia and New Zealand between 1880 and 1900 would require a book in itself, and even our study of the indigenous New Zealand expressions must of necessity be somewhat cursory.

For both our Dominions the closing two decades of last century brought great development; the wild rush of gold-seeking days was over; backblock lands had been opened up; we were gaining a footing in world markets for our primary produce. Immigration continued on a large scale, bringing people to populate our cities and to provide us with some solid feeling of belonging somewhere. Thousands flocked into country settlements as markets grew for our meat and wool, and it is for this reason that a great many of the new slang terms current in those days concerned farms and shearing and country life in general.

We have few more serviceable Australasian expressions than **to run rings around** a person, which can be used in both literal and figurative senses to extremely good effect. As recently as January 3, 1940, the version **to make rings round** was used in a leader of the *London Times*. **To run rings round** certainly hailed originally from the country, and there is every reason to suspect that it came from the shearing shed. The terms **to ring a shed** and to be **a ringer**, i.e. to be the fastest and most

expert shearer in a shed, have been used for so many generations that they are quite orthodox in the antipodes.

The term **ringer** is now applied also to a person who is particularly competent at any manual labour.

From the New Zealand shearing sheds came those effective expressions **to drag the chain** and **swing the gate**, phrases applied to the slowest and the fastest shearer in a shed respectively. Just as **ringer** is used for the most expert shearer, **drummer** is used for the worst. We find shears called **jingling johnnies** and **tongs**; sheep without wool on their bellies or inner portions of their back legs are **barebellies**; and the narrow strips of flesh carved off a sheep, especially when opening up the neck of a fleece by a rough shearer, are **bootlaces**.

Acland* has noted the New Zealand use of the verb **to barrow**, "to shear or partly shear a sheep for a shearer." He adds: " 'No barrowing allowed on the board' was at one time a rule which the Shearers' Union got into the award. Boys often finish or begin a sheep for a shearer who, of course, is responsible for its being properly shorn."

The use of **board** for the floor of a shearing shed is also slang. Whence comes **a full board** and **boss-over-the-board**.

Earlier in this chapter I noted the word **crawler** in its application to a shepherd. It is doubtless by analogy that we have in New Zealand the term **lizard** for a sheep musterer. The land patrolled by a shepherd is called his **beat**. Sheep which are reserved for station eating are called **killers** just as others which will be sent overseas as mutton are called **freezers**. When flocks are mixed they are said to be **boxed**, and from this peculiar use of the verb we have derived the term a **box-up**, a state of confusion, and **to be in a box**, to be in a confused state of mind, in a quandary.

*Op. cit.

From the country, too, has come that colourful expression the **long paddock** for the open road. It may be of English origin, but our use of **paddock** for an area of land of any size is of sufficient interest to merit comment. In its original English use a **paddock** was nothing more than a small field, but in New Zealand and Australia it is applied to a fenced area of any size, even a hundred acres or more in extent. We have also made a verb out of it: **to paddock land**, to put up fences; **to paddock stock**, to put stock into a paddock.

Among other terms we have derived from farm life and sheep stations are **moleskin squatter**, "a working man who has come to own a small sheep run"; **overlander**, one who travels sheep, and **overlanding**; **pink eye**, ophthalmia suffered by sheep and shepherd caused by flying dust during droving; **Jacky Howe**, a type of singlet or sleeveless shirt worn by shearers (so-called after a noted shearer of that name); **even terms**, "working for one's tucker"; and **blacksmith**, an incompetent station cook.

The **swagger**, or tramp, is worthy of a chapter in himself, for like most of the vagabonds of the world he has added considerably to our store of slang. Space, however, does not allow much to be said about him. The expression **swagger** actually originated in Australia, but it has been obsolete there since the 1890's, being ousted by **swagman** and **swaggie**, two terms which are not heard often in this country. Acland notes in his *Glossary* that the real **swaggers** "almost disappeared (in New Zealand) between 1900 and 1920 and what are called **swaggers** now usually look more like tramps; they cannot even roll their swags neatly." Some amplification of this statement is necessary. In the early days a vast number of shearers and station hands moved about the country **humping their swag** in search of work. These were the real **swagmen**, the men whom Edward Wakefield in *New Zealand After Fifty Years*, 1889,

described with euphemistic accuracy as **travelling labour** and **travelling labourers**. To-day these temporary or seasonal workers have less laborious methods of travelling the country, and it has been left to the professional tramp, more particularly the type of man which the Australians call a **sundowner**, because of his practice of dodging work by arriving at a station at sundown, to carry on the traditions of the road. **Swag** is an old English word for stolen booty, but since the earliest days it has been in use in these two countries for such personal possessions as can be carried by a tramp. A synonymous term is **bluey**. The phrase to **carry one's swag** is used to describe a condition of penury, while such expressions as **to swag it** and **go on the swag** need no elaboration. To conclude, we may recall the country use of the phrase **to look for one's swagstraps**, to consider leaving one's job in search of another.

Tussocker is a New Zealand equivalent for the Australian **sundowner** mentioned above. The tussock lands are a peculiar feature of this country and it is from them that the term has been derived, just as have **tussock tether** or **tie**, to tie a horse to a clump of tussock in such country, and **tussock knot**, the method of tying to prevent the horse breaking away. In later years we have records of the phrases **to sleep with Mrs. Green** and **to doss in the star hotel**, used by tramps to describe sleeping in the open.

Acland has listed many of the country terms in common use in New Zealand, but his attention has been directed mainly to Canterbury. Since much of our early pastoral development was in that province, however, his work is of particular value. Here, in brief, are some of the indigenous New Zealand expressions noted by him which were current at the end of last century: **cookshop**, a kitchen; **cowspank**, to be a dairy farmer or a farmhand, whence **cowspanker** (we also use **cattle-**

banger and **cow-banger**); **dingbats**, delirium tremens; **johnny-come-lately**, a nickname for a farm hand recently arrived from England; **to play the piano**, to run one's fingers over the backs of sheep to find which are the easiest to shear; **found a nail**, rhyming slang for "round the tail"; **hutch**, rhyming slang for "crutch"; **strangers**, wandering sheep; a **tripehound**, a sheepdog; the **signs of the Zodiac**, concerning which Acland notes: "When the Christchurch Club was started by twelve squatters as a place at which to live when in town there were never more than two of the twelve visible at the same time, so they were given this nickname."

Of general terms, not necessarily applied to country life, there are many, among them further adaptations from the Maori. **Kia ora** as the equivalent of cheerio! or good luck! especially in a toast, was speedily anglicized, as was **haeremai**, welcome! as a loose term of greeting; **cockabully**, that highly indispensable term of our childhood days, was evolved by corrupting the native **kokopu**, just as **goory**, a dog, was developed from **kuri**. By the 1890's the phrase **to dance a haka** had been adopted to describe an exhibition of pleasure; we had even acquired **as dead as the moa** to replace the hackneyed English **dead as the dodo**. We had begun to **pukaroo** things, when we broke something, confused an issue, or ruined some plan of action. This is derived with extraordinary simplicity from the Maori **pakaru**, broken, though with that human instinct for believing the worst many New Zealanders have contented themselves with thinking that it comes from the verb **to b - - - r**. We slipped into the easy way of calling a person **porangi** instead of crazy or stupid, and a stomach-ache became, with excellent alliterative effect, a **pain in the puku**. I suspect also that when we speak of an offensive stench as a **ponk** we are coupling the Maori **puhonga**, stinking, offensive, with the earlier English use of **pong**.

During this period we have our first record of **Captain Cooker** for a wild New Zealand pig. It is traditional

that Cook introduced pigs into this country. **Pig-islands** for the Dominion and **pig-islander** for an inhabitant would not have come into being but for that fact. We find these two latter terms used widely on the east coast of Australia. This fact serves as a reminder that **the other side** has for long been current in this country for the Commonwealth, i.e. the other side of the Tasman. **Enzed** and **Enzedder** were also coming into colloquial use by the end of last century, though we have Acland's word for it that "until about 1900 most New Zealand-born people spoke of themselves as **colonials**."

Probably for the good reason that a great proportion of the whites in this country looked on themselves as colonials, they found no more affectionate term for Great Britain than **Home**. From the earliest days when Englishmen came south into the antipodes England had been **Home** to them; in Australia we find written records of its use in the first year of the nineteenth century. There was nothing particularly notable in this fact; for centuries Englishmen had used the term for their native land. But the word becomes of interest when people born in Australia or New Zealand continue to refer to England as **Home**. After all, their **home** is surely their native land. The word has been given a sufficiently hackneyed use in New Zealand to appear regularly in print, as though it were an alternative name for Britain. In Australia its use in this sense is practically obsolete. **Home** to the Australians means their native land; it is becoming increasingly so-used in New Zealand.*

In passing we may remark on the slang use of **homey** for an Englishman. **Pommy** has already been noted; **choom**, also a New Zealand use for an Englishman, is merely the lengthening (as in English Midland dialects) of the vowel in **chum**. The expression **new chum**, with

*When an article of clothes, etc., becomes worn and ceases to be of service it is said colloquially *to have gone home*. This use is probably derived from the fact that many New Zealanders go *Home*—visit Britain—when they are old.

the occasional use of **old chum** as its opposite, was originally Australian, but had become current in this country by the middle of last century. **Old hand**, in the first place used for an ex-convict, but later for any man who had had his **colonial experience**, was more often used than **old chum**.

Old country and **old land** are close enough to standard English not to require comment, but it is necessary to pause at **Old Dart**, used similarly. The origin of this expression is obscure. There is some possibility that it is of Irish origin. An observer of slang in Australia at the beginning of this century notes that "Irish immigrants speak of Ireland as **the ould dart**." This, however, is not much nearer to solving the problem, for we have no explanation as to why Ireland should earn the name any more than Britain. One suggestion concerning its derivation is that it is connected with Dartmoor.

Among the many colourful phrases which New Zealand has contributed to the English language is **fire in the fern** for trouble or smouldering discontent. The expression **to spread like fire in the fern**, used of a rumour and even of an epidemic, is useful as well as alliterative. Dealing with the Maori Wars in the *Sydney Telegraph* as recently as February, 1940, a writer says: "The fire in the fern has now gone out. Justice is being done to the Maoris," which reveals that in Australia the phrase is linked with New Zealand.

The West Coast of the South Island was probably known as **the Coast** before 1880, but we have no records of it until after that date. **Coaster**, for a resident of that part of the Dominion is also well known. Several other sections of the New Zealand coastline are known as **the Coast**, notably the East Coast of the North Island, but the general application is to the South Island.

In a detailed reference to **Maori** in an earlier chapter no mention was made of its slightly contemptuous adjectival use, as in **a Maori dog**, **a Maori garden**, **Maori**

manners. Here the term is employed to signify something unkempt, rather disordered or wild, something a little "uncivilized." This use must not be confused with the application of the adjective **Maori** to describe certain species of native flora and fauna, as for instance, Maori cabbage, Maori hen, Maori celery, Maori broom, Maori edelweiss, etc. There are several dozen such examples. A term such as **Maori head**, however, used familiarly for the sedge *carex virgata* comes within the scope of colloquial speech. **Niggerhead** is used for another variety of this sedge, *carex secta*.

In his work *Popular Names of New Zealand Plants*, 1926, Johannes C. Andersen declares: "The word 'native' has been prefixed to almost as many names (of flora) as the words 'New Zealand'—native aniseed, native convolvulus, etc. This word may perhaps be descriptive if used within New Zealand and between New Zealanders; but if used outside—say in Australia—its meaning will be quite changed; for should the New Zealander speak of the 'native teak', the Australian would think not of a New Zealand but of an Australian tree. The confusion might be avoided were the word 'Maori' used instead of 'native' and, indeed, instead of the long doublet 'New Zealand'. There is Maori cabbage, Maori onion—why not Maori aniseed, Maori convolvulus, etc.?"

Also meriting attention are Andersen's pertinent remarks concerning plant and tree names: "In some instances the Maori name has been adopted but corrupted: **matagowry** for **tumatakuru**, where **wild Irishman** is not used; **biddy-bid** for **piripiri**; **bunger** (now fortunately seldom heard) for **ponga**; **cracker** (also falling into disuse) for **karaka**. **Kowhai** went through many stages—**goa**, **gohi**, etc., before settling to the two forms **kowhai** in the North and **gowhai** or **gowai** in the South."

Biddy-bid for the well-known burr, is deserving of more detailed mention. Other versions of it are **biddy-biddy** and **bid-a-bid**. The verb **to biddy**, to remove these

burrs (from one's clothes) has been current since before 1880.

The following New Zealand terms, recorded during the closing twenty years of last century, are also worthy of comment: **digger's delight**, a large felt hat worn by gold-diggers in New Zealand; **tannergram**, recalling the days when a twelve-word telegram might be sent for 6d.; **Johnny Woodser**, a drink taken alone "with the flies" (this is a New Zealand version of the Australian **Jimmy Woodser**); **Tommy Dodd**, an alcoholic drink; **white Maori**, tungstate of lime (New Zealand miners' use); **V.D.L.**, "hard timber of several kinds exported from Australia," the initials standing for Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), which had a considerable timber trade from the earliest days; **sawyer**, a bush nickname for the repulsive grasshopper called **weta** by the Maoris; and the expressions **summer country** and **winter country** of farming usage.

In *New Zealand After Fifty Years*, published in 1889, Edward Wakefield declares that New Zealand shearers and swagmen "use shocking language and seem to take a pride in rivalling one another in the ingenuity and elaborateness of their oaths and epithets."

This indulgence in "bad language" has been a noted feature of New Zealand and Australian slang since the earliest days. The convicts in one country and the whalers in the other were not likely to have a refining influence upon subsequent generations, while the difficult nature of much pioneering life, its dullness and drabness, encouraged colourful outbursts. The Rev. J. F. H. Wohlers refers in his *Memoirs* to the New Zealand chief called "Bloody Jack by the Englishmen, because in his English which he learned mostly from the rough whalers and traders he often used the low word **bloody**." In McNab's *Old Whaling Days* we may find, p. 197, that even the captain of a whaling ship was moved to note (ca. 1830) "the most blackguard language from five English boats there, sparing no person at all."

The bullock-driver has always had a reputation for being able to use language as a weapon with which to lash lagging beasts, and as long ago as 1864 Charles R. Thatcher, the comic writer who was mentioned earlier in connection with the popularization of **old identity**, used the expression **to talk bullock**.

Thatcher also wrote:

"If nice expressions you would learn,
Colonial and new,
Some bullock driver who is bogged
Is just the man for you."

The noun **bullocky** has even been evolved to describe the language used by such men. In his *New Zealand Sheep Station Glossary*, Acland remarks that **bullockies** "were famous for swearing and the old story of the parson who said 'Even a bullock-driver has a soul to be saved' is still told up-country."

It is to be doubted whether as many vulgarisms have been rendered innocuous in other countries as in Australia and New Zealand.

Chapter VI

TWENTIETH CENTURY

UNTIL 1890 the evolution of New Zealand slang had been a relatively even process, the period of greatest development being that which has just been tackled. After the turn of the twentieth century, however, we are to witness a speeding-up. Our towns were growing, larger sections of the population were crowding together, life was becoming settled, we were putting down roots. A subtle change entered our slang: it became grown up, concerned not so much with rural life, but with a faster rate of living. It was also more confident of its background, less concerned with English idiom, just as a great majority of the youngsters were not concerned with England, for the good reason that they were New Zealand born.

There were to be many changes in the twentieth century: war, prosperous days, depression, recovery, and war again. These have left an indelible mark on our speech.

As was noted in the previous chapter a special Australasian Supplement had been published to Webster's *Dictionary* in 1898. This work went into another edition in 1904 and increased attention was devoted to expressions from New Zealand and Australia. Reference is made in this edition to "the rich contribution of words and meanings peculiar to Australasia." The editors continue: "The wonderful development of this branch of the English-speaking race has had its natural accompaniment in the growth of a new vocabulary, but until 1898 there was a very meagre representation of this in works of English lexicography."

In 1912 Messrs. Macmillan and Co., London, published what they described as *A Modern Dictionary of the Eng-*

lish Language with an Australasian Supplement. It had little to add to what had already been published so far as New Zealand and Australia were concerned, and it appears to be more or less a repetition of a great deal of Professor Morris's *Austral English* without his documentary merits. It is of interest, however, since it is the first English dictionary to contain an even moderately comprehensive list of Australasian terms.

In modern editions of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* may be seen a list of a hundred or so slang expressions indigenous to our two countries, but in the 1911 edition of that work it was stated that the only Australasian expression to have won acceptance in Britain at that time was **larrikin**. However, when the London *Daily Chronicle* declared in 1905 that there were slang terms enough in Australia and New Zealand "to make a dictionary an essential to the proper understanding of an antipodean journal" we are provided with testimony to the fact that the bulk and significance of our indigenous speech was sufficient to call for remark abroad.

Perhaps the first event of the twentieth century to give New Zealanders a sense that they had an identity apart from the supplying of primary produce to England was the success recorded by the 1905-6 Rugby footballers in Britain. The name **All Blacks**, coined to describe these and all subsequent New Zealand representative footballers (derived from the garb worn), remains as a record that New Zealanders had begun to go out into the world, not as strayed Englishmen, but as inhabitants of their own country.

New Zealand was no longer merely a colony; it became the **Dominion**, the **Shakey Isles**, the **Quaky Isles**, **God's Own Country**, and so on. To theatricals it became **Fullers' Earth**, commemorating the noted Fuller brothers. New Zealanders were **Fernleaves** and **Kiwis**. By 1915 many of them were **Anzaes**, and the **digger** had won a place of renown in the story of our Empire. When, twenty-five years later, another generation of New

Zealanders were to go overseas to war they also were to bear the names **Anzacs** and **diggers**.

The term **Anzac** was originally confined to men who fought at Gallipoli, although popular use soon widened the scope of its application. The originator is variously claimed to be Sir Ian Hamilton, General Birdwood, Major C. M. Wagstaff, and Lieut. A. T. White. In their *Dictionary of Soldier Words and Phrases* (1925), Fraser and Gibbons have an interesting note on the term.

The peculiar New Zealand use of **echelon** for successive divisions of an Expeditionary Force has already been noted.

Among numerous terms originated in the first Great War* we may note **Bill Masseys** for army boots issued in this country (derived from the name of the New Zealand Minister); **chatty** or **chati**, a louse (the versions **koota** and **kooti** from the Maori **kutu**, a louse, had been in use much earlier); **to dip south**, to put one's hand into one's pocket; **a blue duck**, a rumour; **just quietly**, between you and me!; **komate**, a dead or wounded soldier or horse (from the Maori **ka mate**); **let me chat you**, take my advice!; **mad money**, a return fare carried by a soldier's feminine acquaintance in case she "got mad" because of too-amorous attention; **North Sea rabbits**, herrings; and **shot full of holes**, drunk (an elaboration of **shot**).

Need to find some outlet for pent-up feelings resulted in the concoction of **blimey charley!** (why charley?); **by Christchurch!**; **hooya!**, a children's expression that is probably the equivalent of "Who are you?"; **that'll be the day!**, used as a cant phrase expressing mild doubt following some boast or claim by a person; **Well, what do you know!**, another discrediting cant phrase; and **they're off Mr. Cutts!**, meaning "things have started!" or "now we're getting down to business!"

*Many of these are to be found in Partridge's *Dictionary of Slang*. Partridge was a *digger*.

Of children's terms in addition to **hooya!**, given above, we may note **snitcher**, **snitch**, **whopeacker**, **bottler**, and **snozzler**, descriptive of something superlative or excellent, both as nouns and adjectives; and the popular farewell expression **hooray!** All of these terms are, of course, frequently used by adults. New Zealand children are particularly avid users of slang and show a catholicity of choice that does credit to their zest in living. Purely as a matter of interest, not because all the expressions are indigenous to New Zealand, the following selection, which I have noted in constant use by our youngsters, is worthy of scrutiny:

hangava	jakealoo	chink
hangashun	trimmer	dinky
bobbydazzler	bonzer	dinkydie
rubydazzler	bosker	wonky
dag	rube	batty
swinjer	grouce	barmey
pearler	stonker	dotty
stunner	dinnyhazer	looney
snorter	rorter	dippy
snodger	rumpty	binjey
ripsnorter	rumptydooler	skite
hammer	purter	sheila
corker	dickin!	goosgog
jake	spon	chutty

The list could be extended to three or four times the length without difficulty. A fairly large percentage are Australian in origin, but there are quite a number of English and American terms among them. It is scarcely necessary to remark once again that adults employ them liberally; children, however, are probably the chief practitioners.

Emerging originally from children's slang to bulk quite considerably in a grown-up world is the serviceable term **bot**. Its origin seems to be medical, since in early uses **bot** is rendered as a germ, doubtless from **bot-fly**.

From this comes the phrase of greeting, **How are the bots biting?** By the 1920's a **bot** is being used extensively for a troublesome person, for a persistent borrower, a financial parasite. By 1925 the noun **bot** was translated to a verb, and as a result we have **to bot**, to borrow money, to impose on others, and **botting**, the practice. **To bot on** a person is widely used. An interesting extension of the term is to be found in Australia, in which country **to bite** is often the equivalent for **bot**. Here we find that **cold biting** is rendered as a straight-out request by a tramp or dead-beat for money. On the other hand **cold botting** is a straight-out request for food at house-doors. For those interested in tramp language it may be added that **cold pigging** describes the practice of hawking goods from door to door. Of fairly recent development in New Zealand is the phrase **to have the bot**, to be sick or out of sorts, moody or disagreeable.

A bowler hat has become a **bun** in colloquial speech, taking its place beside the Australian **boxer** or **peadodger** and the American **derby**; a dentist is a **gumdigger**; we use **midgie** for a shilling, where the Australian habitually uses **deener**, and describe a £1 note as a **nicker**, with **half-nicker** for ten shillings; money in general we call **oodle**; while **razoo**, which Partridge suggests has been derived from the Maori **raho**, is in currency for a small coin. This term also has wide use in Australia and in both countries it is heard mainly in the negative phrases **I haven't a razoo** or **I haven't a brass razoo** for "I have no money at all."

We have also acquired some underworld slang of our own: **blow a tank**, to break open a safe with explosive; **peter school**, a gambling den; a **scaler**, a criminal who absconds with his partner's share of the booty; **compo king**, a social parasite who makes a practice of injuring himself or malingering in order to secure workers' compensation; **snelt**, a sneak thief (also a general term of abuse); **shoddy dropper**, a seller of cheap serge; and **punter**, an assistant of a pickpocket who diverts the

victim's attention while robbery is committed. Other expressions of similar type include: **to make a sale**, to vomit; **little house**, a privy; **to show a point to someone**, swindle a person; **poled** for stolen; **shelfer**, a police informer (**fizgig** is the Australian term); and **kath**, a prison sentence of indeterminate length.*

We have a more acceptable type of slang than this, however. Among the terms which are of considerable use to us in our daily life, for instance, is **to have the wood on a person**, to have an advantage over someone.

The origin is obscure, but it is probably formed on the phrase—also indigenous to New Zealand—**to have the goods on**, to have sufficient evidence against (a person) to secure a conviction. Rhyming slang is not in great currency in this country, but the above is an interesting example of it.

To call the game in, to cease any activity, has been current since early in the twentieth century; **to hotten up one's copper**, to consume warm food or drink hot tea; **to mind one's own pigeon**, to mind one's business (an interesting extension of the English slang **someone's pigeon**, someone's business or private affair); **to bounce the ball**, to test public feeling on a matter, to try the market (a phrase popularised, I understand, by a well-known New Zealand politician who also introduced this country to the term **snivelling snufflebuster**); **to give a person his running shoes**, to dismiss a person from office (also a political use), which is an extension of the phrase **to get the run**, to be dismissed or fired; **to hook one's bait or mutton**, to depart (a variant of the English **sling one's hook**); **to keep a dog and bark yourself**, to make a better door than a window (used of a person obstructing the view), **mokey as a wet hen**, rough as a bag (the Australians also have **rough as bags**), and **rough as a pig's breakfast**; **to travel at the rate of knots**; and

*The Australian underworld has *Kathleen Mavourneen*, with a somewhat similar application. It is from the song, "It may be for years and it may be forever."

work a dead horse, a New Zealand variation of the Australian **ride the dead horse** and **work off a dead horse**, meaning to perform work that has already been paid for or to redeem a debt (both the New Zealand and Australian uses, it should be noted, are variations of an earlier English phrase).

The verb to **dag** and the noun **dags** have been used in the country since the earliest days—they have been inherited from English dialect—but only recently a new and authentically New Zealand meaning was given to the verb. In the February 1940 issue of *National Education*, p. 16, appeared a reference to a pair of trousers which had “been dagged at a convenient length round the ankles” of its youthful Maori wearer. To **dag** a sheep is, of course, generally known, but its application to the hacked hem of a pair of cut-down trousers is an interesting contribution to New Zealand colloquial speech.

The farming community has given us another useful expression in **our muttons**. When we speak of something being **our muttons** or **a person's muttons** we mean that it is regarded with particular favour, that we like it especially well.

Numerous terms bequeathed to us by shearers and tramps and farmers have been noted in previous chapters. Here are a few more that appear to have originated this century: **to take the burnt chops** (said of a person), to take on work as a musterer; **cobbler**, the last load of hay in a harvest (the Australian use of **cobbler** for the last sheep in a shearing pen is the original); **hash-me-gandy**, station stew (perhaps a sardonic reference to the meagre feeding requirements of Mahatma Gandhi); **a Sunday dog**, an indolent sheep or cattle dog.

The verb to **batch**, to live alone or to live in company with members of one's own sex, has been current for a considerable period in English slang, but it has been left to this country—at least I have not discovered an earlier

use elsewhere—to turn the term into a noun. As a result we now find **batch** and **bach** used widely in “To Let” advertisements in New Zealand newspapers. Originally it was used for a small shack or **whare** in which a man or men lived alone; later it became a seaside cottage where members of either sex lived alone. To-day almost any fairly small cottage in a holiday resort, whether occupied by members of both sexes or not, is termed a **bach** or **batch**. The word is of course derived from **bachelor**.

Other terms which probably hailed originally from the country are **to camp**, a shearers’ use noted by Acland,* meaning to work slowly in order to leave a difficult sheep for another shearer; a **buck Maori**, a large well-built native (a somewhat unwarranted construction on **buck nigger**); **to bull the tea**, to put soda into tea to make it stronger; **cockatoo’s weather**, sun all day and rain at night (this has also been recorded by Acland, but since **cockatoo** is originally an Australian term it is probable that the derivative is also Australian); **crackers**, cart-ridges; and **cady** or **kadi**, a straw hat (the use of **caddie** for a slouch hat had been noted in the Australian bush at the end of last century by Morris*).

In *Slang, To-day and Yesterday*, Partridge observes that “Maori words have been much more widely adopted or adapted than have Australian aboriginal words.” This fact has already become obvious from the many examples that have been given in preceding chapters. The Maori language has been of considerable service to us in colloquial speech and our borrowings from it will probably increase in the future.

To **give jaro to** a person, to scold or vituperate, is noted as a New Zealand use in the *Oxford Dictionary*. It is suggested, with what authority it is a little difficult to assess, that it has been derived from the Maori **iaua**, stay! hold! We have also put into wide use the term **kit**

*Op. cit.

for a shopping basket. This provides an exceedingly interesting example of the way in which new shades of meaning may be given to old terms in obscure ways. In the Maori language we find **kete**, defined as a basket made of strips of flax, and it is almost certainly from this that we obtain the particularized use of **kit** given above. Although the term appears in standard English in numerous senses, it is only in New Zealand that it has this application. **To be pie at** (or **on**), to be expert or efficient at something, is another phrase of wide use in this country. It has been derived from the Maori **pai**, good.

Such terms as **kapai**, for good, or as an exclamation of pleasure; **tena koe**, a salutation; **pipi**, incorrectly described as a "cockle"; **taihoa**, hold on! wait a bit! have anglicized histories dating back to the earliest days and are worthy of close attention. When we refer **to holding a tangi** about a setback or problem we are putting another Maori term into colloquial use, while when we call a shandygaff **titoki** we are giving an authentic native word a meaning it has never had before. In regard to this expression the former wide use of **she-oak** in Australia for beer has probably had some effect. We have long since adopted **wahine** as a general expression for a woman, and use the doggerel Maori **mungimungitaipo!** as a ferocious expression. **Taipo**, it may be added, was noted by Morris as applied by the Maoris to "a surveyor's theodolite because it is a land-stealing devil," and another application of the term was to a vicious horse. It is derived from the Maori **taepo**, a goblin or spectre; loosely, a devil.

Other twentieth century New Zealand expressions of varied use include **baldy!** a schoolboy term synonymous with the English **fain I!** implying refusal; **blokery**, the male sex in general and bachelors in particular; **boiled dog**, "side" or affectation; **to cherry**, a term used at Wellington College to describe the initiation of new boys with the aid of knotted ropes, straps, and sticks (a now

obsolete practice, I understand); **good ink**, something pleasant or agreeable; **to go jaggging**, to make social visits usually with the object of gossiping (derived from the English **gad** and **on the jag**); **kidney pie**, humbug or deceit, closely related to the Australian **kidstakes** with a similar meaning; **mudhook**, a hand; **sleever**, a drinking straw (the Australian expression **long sleever** for a long drink should be noted); **snork**, a baby (the versions **snork** and **snorker** are commonly used in Australia for sausages); and **tommy**, a country term for bread baked with currants and sugar (this was probably current in the 1890's).

Stumer, as the equivalent of a failure, applied particularly to a person, is also of New Zealand use. When someone has failed miserably in some task or is in a hopeless tangle of confusion, he is said to be **in a stumer**. The relation to the English **to be in a stew** should be noted. To crash financially is **to come a stumer**. The term is probably derived from English dialect, **stomber**, to confuse or confound, or **stummer**, to stumble.

Surf-hurdling seems to be a New Zealand term, though there is reason to suspect that it is used extensively in the Pacific. It describes the practice of landing goods from a ship to shore in an open boat on an exposed coastline. The taking of goods, especially wool, from shore to ship in an open boat is also termed **surf-hurdling**.

Mention must also be made of **hen-cackle** and the **Hokitika swindle**, both of which appear to have originated in the South Island. The former term is applied by mountaineers to a mountain that is easy to climb. Doubtless there is a wider application of the term since **a mere hen-cackle**, a trifle, seems to have been the origin of the application. **The Hokitika swindle** is an hotel bar game played in order to create a jackpot from which payment for drinks may be made. It is based on a method of counting, whereby the person who calls a

certain number in sequence pays a specified sum into the jackpot.

Southerly buster, for a strong southerly wind, needs no elaboration. It is apparently of Australian origin. **Windy Wellington**, as a nickname for the capital city, has also been popularized this century. While on the subject of winds it is of interest to note **the Barber** which Acland says is "a very bitter cold wind which blows down the gorge of the Mawhera and afflicts the river front, railway station, and adjacent streets of Greymouth." He adds that miners used the word in the 1860's.

No record of our slang would be complete without reference to the famed organization, the Plunket Society. For the past twenty years or more it has been known as **the Plunket**, and from it we have derived **to plunket a baby**, or, even more tersely, **to plunk a baby**, with further extensions in **to get plunked**, **to get trubied** (recalling the noted Sir Truby King), and **to get karitanied** (derived from the Karitane Home).

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Among a variety of indigenous terms that at various periods have had some currency in New Zealand are **boil-up**, to become angry, recorded in 1874; **buck-shot**, a settler's term for granulated lava embedded in sandy alluvium, in use before 1851; **colonial oven**, "a plain oven without divisions, trays or dampers, like a box with the door at one side," from before 1890; **indian**, applied to the natives in the early days; **Middle Island**,* a now-obsolete name for the South Island (still to be found in certain Statutes, I understand); **New Zealandese**, a term used before the native language of this country became

*What are now known as the North Island, the South Island, and Stewart Island were formerly New Ulster, New Munster, and New Leinster. These latter names were discarded by the Constitution Act of 1852. However, for a considerable period afterwards the South Island was termed the Middle Island, and Stewart Island was called the South Island.

known by the name Maori; **rangatira**, a leading citizen, a magistrate (taken directly from the Maori), in very early use; **whale's back**, concerning which Acland notes: "A hill that rises steeply and slopes gradually down suggests a whale and so there are hills and blocks of country in various parts of Canterbury called **the Whale's Back**"; **Te Ika a Maui**, "Maui's fish," used occasionally for New Zealand; and **The Maori Magna Charta**, for the Treaty of Waitangi.

. . . .

Since the foregoing was written several correspondents have forwarded additional expressions to me.

The use of **hiki**—or perhaps it should be spelt **hickey**—for a "thingumbob" is reported from the South Island. **Do-hiki**, apparently an elaboration of the above, is used similarly.

Another writer states that **Taranaki** is now used as an adjective of contempt, in the South Island at least. He notes : **Taranaki gate**, a home-made gate consisting of wires attached to two battens (with or without intermediate battens). The batten at one end is permanently wired to the gate post; the other end is wired so that it may be easily untied. **Taranaki cow**, a nondescript beast of poor type. **Taranaki top dressing**, a facetious euphemism for cattle-dung.

Also reported is **Nelson huntaway**, a stone rolled down a hillside to move stock below instead of sending a dog out. "From the fact that in the early days the Nelson musters were noted for having few and poor dogs." In the slang of Canterbury and Marlborough shepherds, **sandy hooker** is used for a Nelson musterer.

Chapter VII

THE DEBT TO AUSTRALIA

THE closeness of the link between New Zealand and Australia has been sufficiently emphasized in preceding pages not to require undue elaboration here. The countries have grown up side by side not merely geographically but culturally. Their destiny must always be together.

Topographically, of course, there is a considerable difference between our two Dominions, but they have several particularly important common features. The first is that they are both some 12,000 miles distant from Britain, and the second that their social and economic existence is largely dependent upon primary production—upon the soil. When added to these is the fact that they sit side by side in the south seas, it is obvious that they cannot escape the kinship which geography has forced on them.

Enough has been said about the growth of indigenous speech in this country to make it clear that we have undeniable characteristics of our own, but before we can say that we have dealt properly with the subject of slang and colloquialisms in this country it is necessary to investigate a little further the borrowings we have made from across the Tasman. These have been innumerable, but just as many New Zealand terms have no currency at all in the Commonwealth, so hundreds of Australian terms are unused here. **Never never, brumbee, myall, pooch, bobbars, and she-oak**, for instance, will have little meaning for most New Zealanders, and even when it is revealed that these terms mean desert, wild horse, wild (an adjective), a greyhound, a fly-veil, and beer, they will probably be of no more than minor interest.

In certain features, however, there is the closest link between the two countries, and none is more important than our common reliance upon primary production. It is only natural therefore that we should have borrowed such terms as **to bail up** (a cow), taken originally from English dialect; **squatter**, taken from English dialect via America; **billy**, from the Australian aboriginal **billa**, water; **buckjump**, **buckjumper**, and **buckjumping** (Morris says that "all the early quotations of **buck** and cognate words are connected with Australia"); **backblocks**; **rouse-about** (America has **roustabout** for a ship's deckhand); **swagman**; **dray** (the English use of **dray** is mainly for a brewer's delivery wagon); and **sheep station**.

Space will not permit mention of more than a few of these expressions, since to give them all would make this book a review of the entire field of colloquial speech in both countries. Perhaps it would be sufficient as an indication of the close link between New Zealand and Australia to show that all the following terms have been derived from **stock** and were originally used in Australia: **stock-book**, first recorded in 1847; **stock-farm**, dating from before 1806; **stock-holder**, 1820; **stock-horse**, 1847; **stock-house**, 1806, **stock-hut**, 1828; **stock-keeper**, 1800; **stock-man**, 1803; **stock-rider**, 1859; **stock-route**, 1886; **stock-run**, 1825; **stock-sick** (said of land), 1890; **stock-station**, 1835; **stock-whip**, 1845; **stock-yard**, 1796. Some of the many derivatives from the simple word **bush** have already been given.

Our borrowings of what might be described as "social" slang have been vast, but the absorption of it has been so steady and the terms have appealed so well to the New Zealand imagination that we have scarcely been conscious of the process. It may well be asked what we should have to take their place if we were suddenly robbed of such serviceable expressions as **wowser**, **larrikin**, **dinkum**, **cobber**, **to barrack**, **hard case** (applied to a person), **financial** and **holding** (descriptive of the state of being well supplied with cash), **Pommy**, and **skite**.

These represent but a smattering of the Australian language from which we have borrowed both widely and well. **To argue the toss, to do the block, to roll up at a meeting, to white-ant a movement:** these are phrases which come almost as easily to the New Zealand tongue as to the Australian. **To point,** to impose on; **push,** a clique; **tucker,** for food; **stoush,** a fight; **cronk,** sick, worthless, or illegal; and **graft,** work; all of these have long since earned a place in our vocabulary.

We are scarcely less adept than the Australians in describing anything objectionable, including persons, as **a cow** or **a fair cow**. An argument or a fight is a **barney**. We **shout** drinks, we occupy a **pozzie**, we **go crook** when we are annoyed.* Children prefer **shanghai** to catapult, **chink** to Chinaman, and **John Hop** to policeman. We use **bonzer** and **Aussie** almost as naturally as the Australians themselves, while one of our standard dishes of mutton is known as **colonial goose**. We call an unpleasant thing (or person) **chronic** when we have too much of it (or him); sixpence is termed a **zack**, and when we are taken down financially we are **scaled**. A person is **flyblown** when he is penniless and **ratty** when he is stupid or angry. **Goodoh** and **rightoh** are used by everyone, even our savants, and the terms **His Ex** or **the G.G.** for our Governor-Generals have long since passed into colloquial speech.

These are a few, but only a few of the many thousands of expressions which our two countries have put into wide currency and he would indeed be a harsh critic who would assert that they are neither serviceable nor colourful. Lack of vigor or colour could not, for instance, be a charge levelled against such terms for strong drink as **lunatic soup**, **Africa speaks**, **plonk**, **steam**, **red Ned**, or **sheep wash**.

New Zealanders and Australians are an alert, active people. In these spacious south seas they have found a new form of life which they must live in their own way,

* cf.: *To be crook*; meaning to be sick

and it has been an inevitable—and a necessary—accompaniment to living that they should have created their own language. Whatever they may think on the subject, let them be wary of dismissing slang as a mere passing phase in the history of their countries, for slang has a strange knack of surviving prejudices against it.

Chapter VIII

ENGLISH AND AMERICAN SLANG

SINCE it may be of interest to New Zealanders to have before them some brief reference to the development of slang in England and the United States of America, a short review of colloquial speech abroad is given in this chapter.

Slang is a live growth; it touches the here and now; the best of it is terse and colourful. There is no reason why we should shy away from it. Our finest writers have not. Aristophanes, Plautus, Terence, Athenaeus, and Martial have used it. So have Chaucer and Shakespeare and James Joyce. In the succinct vigour of slang they have all found something that not only simplifies the expression of ideas, but serves to put the breath of reality into their writing. Noted American writers like John Dos Passos, William Faulkner, and William Saroyan owe much of their success to the fact that they interpret the American scene in American terms. Already we have found numerous Australian writers doing the same for the Commonwealth. Rolf Boldrewood, Joseph Furphy, C. J. Dennis, Brian Penton and Norman Lindsay have given to Australia something that will remain as a valuable contribution to the history of her culture. They have not gone hankering after the gods of English purism or been content to stroll in the lush fields of classic sentimentalism, but have interpreted their own country in terms of the environment and the language which is theirs and, in doing so, have discovered a strength and vigour that have given Australia the sound beginnings of a literature of her own.

English slang goes back to the earliest days of the nation, long before the printing press was evolved, but we have no means of assessing the scope of this slang

until the sixteenth century. Numerous vocabularies of thieves' cant were compiled, among them Copland's *Hye Waye to the Spyttel House*, between 1517 and 1537, John Awdeley's *Fraternitye of Vacabondes* in 1561, and Thomas Harman's *Caveat for Common Cursetours* about 1566. With these beginnings it is to be expected that slang should be found in rich quantities in the pages of Shakespeare, Marlowe, Beaumont, Fletcher, Dekker, and Jonson, among many of our early writers.

Hundreds of terms originated by **rufflers**, **pallyards**, **counterfeit-cranks**, **doxies**, and **priggers of prancers**, to name but a few of the select company of thieves and vagabonds, were being passed into common speech.

Some of the slang of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries survives even to-day. **Cove** is still used for a man; to **plant** means to hide; to **prig**, to steal; and to **shop lift**, to steal from shops. Though not specifically applied to clothes, **duds** was descriptive of personal possessions in Shakespeare's day.

Professor G. H. McKnight, in *English Words and Their Background*, 1923, has paid particular attention to the slang used by Shakespeare. From a couple of the dramatist's works he produces such terms as **dry** for dull; **kickshaw**, a trifle; **tester**, a sixpence; **bum-bailey**, a sheriff's officer; **clod-pole**, a blockhead; **fat chuffs**, rich misers; **clay-brained**, stupid, etc.

The universality of slang is perhaps one of its most important features. It is for this reason that we find Australasian terms in use in Britain and America, just as we can find English slang used in the United States, and American slang in England. It is the great leveller, the lingua franca indeed.

Slang is always just a step ahead of standard speech. **Jabber** and **hoax**, for instance, were slang terms in Swift's time; so were **mob** and **sham**. Even as late as 1860 to **send a man to Coventry** was considered slang by J. C. Hotten. In *The Pains of Opium* Thomas De Quincey

refers to "the slang use of the word **accomplishment** as a superficial and ornamental attainment." It is obvious that language is never static; that, just as new terms are continually graduating to standard speech, so other words, which have for long had the imprimatur of literary approval, are drifting out of use.

Some slang, however, no matter how widely known, seems to be confronted by a wall of general disapproval which prevents it attaining the qualifications of standard speech. **Cove**, mentioned above, is an example. So is **spuds**, recorded in New Zealand in 1845; but **beach-comber**, also noted in this country over a century ago, is no longer slang. There is plainly no set law about this matter. Of extremely old use are such terms as **to blow**, to boast, dating from about 1400; **grub**, for food, from 1659; **lousy**, in the sense of inferior or worthless, from 1690; and **to grease**, to bribe, from 1557.

English slang had a start of many centuries on American slang, and for that reason hundreds of terms are to be found in common use in the United States which were formerly current in Britain. It is often a serious lack of knowledge that encourages people in New Zealand and Australia to believe that we are absorbing large quantities of American slang, when, in many cases, we are doing no more than use terms that have had a long English history. **Squatter**, **larrikin**, **cobber**, and **dinkum**, for instance, all appear to have been inherited from English dialects, our two countries being the first to put them into general use in the senses which they now have.

According to H. L. Mencken, author of *The American Language*, it was not until the great pioneering movement into the West, following the war of 1812, that American slang came into its own. By 1840 it had spread throughout the whole country and Americans were well on the way to being the possessors of a language of extraordinary colour and vigor. Here are some expressions for strong drink that were evolved before the Civil

War: **panther-sweat**, **nose-paint**, **red-eye**, **cornjuice**, **mountain-dew**, **coffin-varnish**, **stagger-soup**, and **tonsil-paint**; for drunk there were such terms as **boiled**, **canned**, **cockeyed**, **stewed**, **tanked**, **pie-eyed**, and **plastered**.

What chiefly lies behind slang is simply a kind of linguistic exuberance, observes Mencken. It relates itself to the standard language a great deal as dancing relates itself to music. But there is also something else. The best slang is not only ingenious and amusing; it also embodies a kind of social criticism.

It is interesting to recall that not many years ago the Right Rev. Cyril Gelding-Bird, assistant Bishop of Guildford and Archdeacon of Dorking, was charged before a Surrey Court with applying the term **speed-cop** to a member of what the English then called **the mobile police**. He was fined £10 and his driving license was suspended for three months. The reason why expressions like **speed-cop** have found approval in English speech is because no more apposite or satisfying words have been offered as substitutes.

The English called the wedge-shaped fender put in front of the first locomotives a **plough**, which was more or less what it was; but the Americans called it a **cow-catcher** and that is the term we use to-day. **Chain store** seems to meet the case more adequately than the English **multiple shop**; **shock-absorber** has held the field against **anti-bounce clip**; and **radio** appeals to us in preference to the English **wireless**.

It is obvious from such examples as these — and Mencken gives many more — that American slang is not to be condemned merely because it *is* American slang. We have borrowed some most serviceable expressions from the United States and there is every reason to suspect that we will continue to do so.

There is, of course, a limit to the borrowings one country can make from another. Much American slang, far more than we would at first be inclined to suspect,

could never have any currency in this country, because the conditions which occasioned its development in the United States do not prevail in New Zealand. For instance, we have no negroes in this country, we have little intensive factory production; our gangsters are few. Slang thrives best against its own background, and unless similar social or environmental conditions exist in two countries the slang of one country cannot be used properly in the other. American wild west expressions may delight thousands of avid students of American magazines and films, but they cannot become part of the texture of common speech in either New Zealand or Australia where environmental conditions so greatly differ from those in the United States.

Here is what Professor Ernest Weekley, the noted English observer, has to say: "If . . . the American temperament persists in its present attitude towards a standardized speech, spoken American must eventually become as distinct from English as Yiddish is from classical Hebrew."

Perhaps in another 150 years the same may be written about Australasian slang.

Constant familiarity with the languages of foreign immigrants, a vast newspaper field in which writers struggle ceaselessly for novelty, and a happy knack of reviving old and partially obsolete English words—a practice upon which comment has already been made—has enlarged the American vocabulary to such proportions that we must agree with H. T. Webster, the American cartoonist, when he says: "Anyone who tries to issue a lexicon of American slang will have something the size of a cow barn."

Lexicon, it will be noted he said, not **dictionary**; and **cow barn**, not **cow shed**.

Americans have many alternatives to the words we use, and in a vast number of cases they do not represent an improvement. **Policeman** is quite as good as the U.S.

patrolman; there is no particular reason why we should exchange **caretaker**, which has done such excellent service, for **janitor**; or **journalist** for **newspaperman**; or **tram-car** for the more cumbersome **trolley-car**. **Dustman** and **dustbin** have served us so well that we have, as yet, shown no tendency to replace them with America's **ashman** and **ashcan**.

There seems little possibility that **promenade** will be superseded by **board-walk**; or the game of **draughts** by **chequers**. **City-ordinance** is such an unwieldy term that we have not yet been tempted to displace our English **by-law** in its favour; and **hardware dealer** seems to offer a not very appreciable improvement on **ironmonger**.

From such examples as these it is clear that, while we can, and do, use many Americanisms in the course of our everyday speech, we rigidly refuse to accept other terms for the good reason that we do not regard them as an improvement upon our own. It may be noted here that we in New Zealand generally prefer **lolly** to the English **sweet** and the American **candy**. New Zealanders often use **bun** and Australians **boxer** where the English say **bowler-hat** and the Americans **derby**.

A general review of English slang would not be complete without some reference to the unusual forms which it sometimes takes. Of particular interest is rhyming slang, of which a little is used in Australia and New Zealand. **Cat and mouse**, for house; **frog and toad**, for road; **bird-lime**, for time; **a lump of lead**, for head. These and hundreds of other examples are current in England, particularly among the Cockneys.

Back-slang—that is, expressions which are spelt and said backwards—is rarely heard in the antipodes and, in any case, serves little purpose other than obscurity. **Enob**, for bone; **nottub**, for button; **stun**, for nuts; **nee-trith**, for thirteen, are some of the best examples; but such a phrase as **cool ta dillo nemo**, “look at the old woman,” is too confusing to the ordinary person to merit particular attention.

Another type of slang is that known as "centre slang," in which vowels are transposed and generally rendered obscure to the uninitiated. It is, indeed, a first cousin to the gibberish which we sometimes hear spoken by children when they wish to exchange confidences not for the ears of adults.

It will be readily understood that slang touches practically every facet of our lives. It reaches into journalism and medicine; into universities and parliaments; it is spoken by children and by criminals; by tramps and worthy citizens. It is the language of everyday life.

Chapter IX

"PIDGIN" ENGLISH IN NEW ZEALAND

"*PIDGIN*" is, of course, anything but an accurate term by which to describe the jargon which developed in this country as a result of the partial fusion of the English and Maori tongues. For a good deal of this jargon, since it represented the Maori rendering of English terms, has, by continued usage, become part of the living texture of the native language. There is obviously not much to distinguish the authenticity of an expression like **py korry!** (by God!) from one like **rekureihana** (regulation), except that the former is colloquial and therefore not fundamentally necessary, while the latter falls into an important niche in relations between white man and Maori. But, it is impossible to make much of this distinction if we are to examine this subject fully, for we would be imposing some arbitrary standard of values on the evolution of speech which can not be sustained.

If, as appears to be suggested by raconteurs and cartoonists, the Maori finds **plurry** (bloody) and **py korry** necessary ingredients of normal conversation, his corruption of the original English is no less obvious than in such a term as **poaka**, pig or pork; **tupeka**, tobacco; or **wiwi**, for a Frenchman (from **oui, oui**), concerning which comment was made in an earlier chapter.

It is obvious, however, that to describe this mixture of English and Maori as "pidgin" is to present a distorted picture, one which would not only underrate the Maori intelligence, but would lower expressions of the type mentioned above to the level of Chinese corruptions of English which were the original pidgin. Nor would it be accurate to describe such expressions as "beach-lamar" which has often been used for South Sea island jargon. The only other description that could be given is

"Pakeha-Maori," which is used by Edward Tregear in his *Maori Comparative Dictionary*, 1891, but since such a term is not understandable to people outside this country, we have no choice but to fall back on "pidgin" in quotation marks and trust that it will not be wilfully misunderstood.

In the introduction to his work (*vide supra*) Tregear declares: "Many words in common use among the Maori people of to-day will not be found in this Dictionary. These are words adopted from the Europeans, mainly for objects not indigenous to New Zealand, or unknown among the Natives prior to the advent of the strangers. Such words are **hoiho**, horse; **kau**, cow; **poti**, boat; **Aperira**, April; **Tihema**, December, etc. The whole English Dictionary travestied into Maori form might have been introduced into the present work if any of these bastard words had been admitted; and the author has been compelled to draw the line rigidly in favour of the pure and undefiled native language (so far as he has been able to distinguish it) and to avoid any use of adopted words."

With all due respect for Tregear's scholarly work it is not possible for us to agree fully with his remarks, for when new concepts were introduced to the Maori and he corrupted English words to describe those concepts, he was adding something material to his own language, not merely as an expedient to facilitate contact with the white man, but to allow the native race to become possessors of a series of new ideas. The fact that Williams, in his *Maori Dictionary*, did not have Tregear's somewhat strained scruples, is therefore to be welcomed. Were the English Dictionary to be travestied wholly or even largely into the Maori language, there would certainly be cause for protest; but Williams has not done this by any means. If by corrupting certain essential English words to render them capable of pronunciation by the Maori tongue, as well as to find a simple method of putting new concepts into intelligible form, the Maori has broadened his vision and understanding, such corruptions

should not be regarded as "travesties," but rather as a tribute to native shrewdness and commonsense. It is, of course, difficult to draw a line between necessary corruptions—necessary, that is, from the point of view of aiding the Maori's acquisition of knowledge—and those corruptions, of which the original Pidgin, Baboo English and Beach-la-Mar are examples, which were concocted as much by white men as by the natives for the purposes of trade and work. If we are to be strict in the matter then all Maori corruptions of English are no more than jargon. It is our natural respect for the intelligence of the Maori race that allows us to lift the subject above such a level.

The educated Maori of to-day is able to pronounce words such as **book** and **Supreme Court** quite as well as an educated Englishman. The corruptions **pukapuka** and **hupurimi-kooti** have been adopted into the Maori tongue not merely to allow the ideas represented in the words **book** and **Supreme Court** to be spoken of between native and white, but to allow natives to understand such ideas when speaking among themselves.

This simple fact cannot be said of true Pidgin and Beach-la-Mar. Examples of the former are: "**Can do chow-chow?**"—Are you able to eat? "**He catchee too-muchee dollar**"—He is very rich. And in the latter we find: "**Kaikai he finish?**"—Is dinner ready? "**Man belong bullamacow him stop**"—The butcher is here.

Except for some minor perversions of the English tongue it may be said that this sort of speech has never had currency in New Zealand. We have a few examples recorded in the early days, it is true, but since the Maori has been quick to master the complications of English syntax he has rarely had to adopt the circumlocutions of Pidgin to make himself understood. Where circumlocutions have been adopted they cannot be regarded as having assumed the status of a more or less standardized jargon between native and white man, and this is the predominant feature of Pidgin and Beach-la-Mar.

However, corruptions of the English tongue are none the less corruptions and if we find such words as **boto**, a boat; **buranket**, blanket; **sitesh'n** (railway) station, listed by Arthur Diosy, in an MS. collection entitled *Japoniana Curiosissima*, as Japanese Pidgin (dealt with in *The New Quarterly Magazine*, London, July, 1879), it is scarcely possible for us to regard the Maori renderings **poti**, **paraikete**, and **teihana** in any other light than as New Zealand "pidgin."

It has been with this point in mind that I have written this chapter—not to lower our regard for Maori intelligence, but to investigate the effects of the fusion of Maori and English languages.

For more than forty years many of the English educators of the native race were the veriest scum of the earth. Here is what a writer in *The Australian* of September 20, 1839, had to say about the inhabitants of this country: "The state of society in New Zealand altogether is deplorably low—'even beyond the low reach of compare'. The cannibalism of the natives, horrid and revolting though it be, is not a whit more repugnant to the feelings of civilized man than some of the daily unblushing practices of the white population. The evil passions and propensities of our nature are here allowed to expand themselves to their fullest and fearfulest dimensions without the slightest control. . . . Crimes of the deepest and blackest are not only everyday occurrences, but are even talked and boasted of by the canaille as if they were the perfection of excellence. The greater the villain, the more disgusting the black-guard, the worthier, the cleverer, and the better companion is the man reckoned."

These were the men who gave the Maori his first taste of "civilized" vices and who—even remembering missionary work in the field of education—were his principal teachers of the English language. Strange to say, it has been men of this type who have done most to spread "pidgin" throughout Melanesia and Polynesia.

H. Schuchardt has done some interesting research on *Melaneso-English; Whaler Jargon, etc.* (quoted in K. Lentzner's *Wörterbuch der Englischen Volkssprache Australiens*, 1891). If jargon of the "**kaikai he finish?**" variety did not become established in this country it is clear that the Maori himself was responsible, not his supposed masters.

He did not, however, escape entirely. Here are some examples recorded by J. L. Nicholas in his *Narrative of a Voyage to New Zealand* in 1815:

ittee ittee workee workee, ittee ittee kiki: A little work and then some food. (*ittee*, of course, is the Maori *iti*, small.)

no tokee, no tokee, no porkee, no porkee: If you don't give me some iron, then I won't give you any pigs. (*tokee* is used for iron by transference from *toki*, an axe or tool.)

crackee crackee: Preaching. (Clearly bequeathed by the whalers, since **to crack**, boast or brag, dates from the fifteenth century in England.)

gammon: Nonsense, deceit. (This has been widely used by the Australian natives.)

piecaninny: A baby or child. (From the West Indies. Nicholas alleged that a New Zealand native said: **homi pickeninnee wow**, "give the child a nail." In his *Journal* of February 1770 Cook had noted the native use of **whow**, as "the name by which English nails were known among the people with whom we had trafficked." This seems to have been acquired by transference from the original native term **whao** for a chisel.)

ittee ittee taboo taboo: "Very little tabooed" (*tapu* is the Maori term).

give it the wow, give it the matow: Give me a nail, a fish-hook (*matau*). (Compare this **give it** with the Australian aboriginal **gibbit**.)

no good: Widely used in pidgin, e.g. **he no good, it no good day.**

The use of **kiki** for food in the first example is worthy of notice. The Maori word is **kai**, but as early as 1807 the versions **kiki** and **kikie** appear in J. Savage's *Some Account of New Zealand*. In *Beach-la-Mar*, 1911, William Churchill points out that **kaikai** is to be found widely spread throughout the South Sea Islands.

In a much earlier chapter reference was made to the use by whalers of **copper maori**. Strictly speaking it should come under the heading of "pidgin" rather than slang. This term for a native oven has as extensive a currency throughout the South Seas as **kaikai**, according to Churchill, and some doubt may be cast on whether either of the expressions was used originally in this country. As there does not appear to be any earlier textual record than I have given above, however, we will probably be justified in regarding the New Zealand use as the original one until we have proof to the contrary. We have the word of Eric Partridge, the English slang authority, that **kai-kai** (the rendering he gives) has been current in New Zealand slang in the twentieth century.

As has already been noted, the Maoris were swift to acquire a knowledge of the English language, which made the circumlocutions of "pidgin" unnecessary. Nicholas (*vide supra*) alludes, for instance, to a native chief who, "having served on board some of the whalers, could speak English very fluently and, on my going up to shake hands with him, he thought proper to return the compliment with 'How do you do, my boy?'" This was in 1815. All the natives, however, were not likely to master English consonants so satisfactorily. Savage (*vide supra*), who took a young native to London in 1807, remarks: "I never could make Moyhanger (Moehanga, the native) pronounce the word England, therefore I was content to allow him to make use of Europe in its stead, which he pronounced without difficulty."

The inevitable Maori inclination to render **s** as **h**, **r** as **t** or **d**, etc., will be obvious in the glossary of examples given at the conclusion of this chapter; but this fact, combined with the often-inaccurate ears of early writers in New Zealand, leaves us in some doubt whether an expression like **wedder-wedder**, for heat, given by Savage, is a badly-rendered form of the native **wera** or a corruption of **weather**, and whether the **tihi** in **tangata tihi**, recorded by Nicholas, is a version of the English **thief** or merely the native **tahae**. We must give such examples the benefit of the doubt, and confine our attention to more obvious corruptions, about which there is no argument.

Before leaving Savage, however, it is of interest to note that he uses **waddy** for a club. For many years there has been considerable argument among Australian scholars as to whether this is an authentic aboriginal term or merely pidgin for **wood**. No earlier record of its use than 1814 has been found in Australia, however, which suggests that it was either introduced into this country from across the Tasman in the early years of the century, or it is indeed a pidgin version of **wood** which appeared in New Zealand independent of Australia.

A term such as **sick**, for worthless or out of order (said of muskets), recorded in 1827 falls into the niche of true pidgin, but the same cannot be said of such terms as the following, to be found in Kendall's *Grammar and Vocabulary of the Language of New Zealand*, 1820: **Jizus Kraist**, **Niw Ziland**, **Niw Zilandar**, **Ingland**, **skul** (school), **Jihova**, **Paradaise**, **Baibel** (Bible), and **Bethlihem**. Kendall and his editor, Professor Samuel Lee, seem to have been under the impression that by chopping the appearance of a word around a little they were casting it into a Maori mould. No native would pronounce these words in this fashion.

As the whaling and vagabond period is the one with which we are particularly interested at this juncture, a list of Maori corruptions of English words (with spelling

as recorded by various commentators) to be found between 1807 and 1845, is given below:

Adama: Adam, 1820.

a-mi-ne: amen, 1831.

Booka Booka: The Bible, 1815. **Buka buka**, a book, 1820; **bouca bouca**, notes or letters, 1834; **booka booka**, a land contract, used in N.Z. Land Co.'s instructions to Col. Wakefield, April 29, 1839; **buka buka**, apparently also used for a land contract, *N.Z. Gazette*, April 18, 1840. The now-accepted rendering **pukapuka**, for book, is recorded in 1842.

copper maori: a native oven, 1834.

Erihapeti: Elizabeth, 1842.

Hanuere: January, 1840.

Hemi: James, 1840.

Hone: John, 1842 (**Honi**, 1840).

Horepa: Horeb, 1842.

Horomai: Solomon, 1842.

hurrahatia: hurrah, 1831.

Ihowa: Jehova, 1842.

Ihu: Jesus, 1842.

Ihu Karaiti: Jesus Christ, 1831.

Ingarani: England, 1840.

kapitana: captain, 1840. (**Kaptan** was given in 1820 by Kendall.)

kawana: Governor, 1840.

kawanatanga: Government, 1840.

Kenehi: Genesis, 1842.

kiki: (a verb) to eat up, 1834. (The noun has already been commented upon.)

koudu, kohudu: crucified, 1820.

kuini: queen, 1840.

manawa: man-o'-war, 1840.

Mane: Monday.

- Mara Iden:** The Garden of Eden, 1820 (Kendall again).
mata: mistress, 1842 (or **master?**).
Matiu: Matthew, 1842.
Miriani: Midianites, 1842.
Mohi: Moses, 1840.
nawi: navy, 1840.
nihee: knife, 1840.
Nu Tirani: New Zealand.
Oriwa: Sinai, 1842.
paraikete: blanket, 1842.
paraoa: flour, (by transference) bread, 1842.
parete: potato, 1820.
pepi: baby, 1842.
Pita: Peter, 1842.
porka: pig, pork, 1820. (This is Kendall's rendering of the next.)
poaka: pig, 1842.
Ponotio Pirato: Pontius Pilate, 1842.
pouder: (gun)powder, 1820 (Kendall). A French version, **poudra**, is recorded in 1831. **Paura** is used to-day.
pukapuka: a book, 1842 (see **Booka Booka**).
Rawiri: David, 1842.
roiara: royal, 1840.
Ruka: Luke, 1842.
Tommi: Tommy, 1820.
tupara: two-barrel (a gun), 1845.
waddy: a club (derived from **wood?**), 1807.
Wenerei: Wednesday, 1840.
Widdim: William, 1840 (a doubtful case).
wiki: week, 1840. (Also used for Sunday, by transference. Recorded by E. J. Wakefield, 1845.)
Wikitoria: Victoria, 1840.
Wiremu: William, 1840.
Yuropi: European, 1820. (**Pakeha juropi**, for a European, is given in the *N.Z. Gazette*, April 18, 1840.)

The date 1842 which follows many of the terms given above shows that the word is to be found in the Rev. R. Maunsell's *Grammar of New Zealand Language*, published in that year. Maunsell appears to have been the first observer to make any comment on the manner in which the Maoris had been adapting the English tongue to their own use. "Sometimes," he stated, "we meet with English appellations employed as appellations in Maori, but with the form peculiar to proper names, e.g. **a mata** mistress (master?), **a pepi**, a baby, **te kawana**, the Governor. These, however, must be regarded as solecisms, and as in no way supported by Maori analogy."

This, in effect, is the view held by Tregear which was quoted earlier.

Among the many corruptions of English words to be found in the Maori translation of the Treaty of Waitangi (1840), published by the Missionary Society, Paihia, are **Wikitoria**, **kuini**, **Ingarini**, **Nu Tirani**, **Kawanatanga**, **kapitana**, **roiara**, and **nawi**, the meanings of which will be found in the list above.

The following examples are of particular interest because of their origins: **haki**, a flag, derived from Union **Jack**; **hitimi**, a child's marble, derived from "hit me"; **kaihe**, an ass or mule, from **jack-ass**; **kanara**, set hard (like candle-grease), from the "pidgin" **kanara**, a candle; **karaone**, a hoe, from **ground**; **matere**, a look-out, from **mast-head**; **miere**, honey, from the French *miel*; **mu**, the game of draughts, from **move**; **pihareinga**, a cricket, "said to be derived from **bush-ranger**," Williams states; **pikopo**, a Roman Catholic, probably from **bishop**; **toronaihi**, a sickle, from **draw-knife**; **ture**, law, which Williams says was "adopted from the Tahitian missionaries who had formed it from the Hebrew **torah** by altering the vowels to avoid unpleasant suggestions" (**tora** in Maori has sexual implications); and **wiwi**, a Frenchman, to which reference has already been made.

Other expressions concerning which the Williams *Dictionary* has special comments to make are **nakahi**,

a serpent, which the editors suggest is derived from the Hebrew **nagash** (in *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute*, Vol. VI, however, Thomson gives both **neke** and **nakehe**, for a snake, and there seems little necessity for seeking such an obscure origin as the Hebrew); **pipipi**, a turkey, "from its cry"; **taika**, piebald, "from **Tiger**, a piebald stallion given by Waaka Nene to Waaka Perohuka, of Poverty Bay, in return for the canoe Te-toki-a-Tapiri"; **wea** and **kaiwea**, for surveyor, "apparently formed from the last part of the word."

This type of "pidgin" is surely the soundest and most colourful to be found anywhere in the world.

The effect of whaler familiarisms, such as **Port Nick** for Port Nicholson (Wellington), should also be noted, for it was in this way that the Maori term **poneke** (now used to describe the Wellington natives) came into being. There are doubtless many other examples.

In *Nomenclature in New Zealand*, 1934, J. C. Andersen notes: "**Wairarapa** was once **Wydrop**, a whaler corruption; **Kekerangu**, which is in turn a mistake for **Kekerengu**, was **Giggerigoo**; Cloudy Bay was **Te Awaiti**, or the whaler corruption for that name—that unique contradiction in terms—**Tarwhite**."

Such influences as these, it is clear, were bound to have a deleterious effect on the Maori renderings of English words. Writing in his *Journal*, September 27, 1823, on the difficulty of recording the Maori language, Samuel Marsden says: "As the New Zealanders were so quick in learning our language and could pronounce the vowels so well according to our custom, I thought it would be advisable to retain the English pronunciation of the vowels as this would greatly facilitate the acquirement of the language. The missionaries would soon then learn to speak and write it. . . . I also recommended (to the Rev. Thos. Kendall, *vide supra*) that all the English terms for such things as the natives had never seen should be introduced into the New Zealand language

—that a sheep should be called a sheep (**tihl**), a cow a cow (**kau**), etc.”

Such recommendations were obviously destined to have a great deal more to do with bequeathing corrupted English words to the Maori language than has been commonly accepted hitherto.

In *Rambles in New Zealand*, 1840, J. C. Bidwill reveals how little was known by whites* in New Zealand of the native language. “I have met with but one person, and never heard of more than four in all the country, who could speak Mowrie so perfectly as to be able to ask even the simplest question not connected with their trade, in such a manner as immediately to make the Mowries understand what they said; and the greater part of them, including men who have been many years in the country, are incapable of speaking more than a couple of dozen sentences, and those not correctly.”

“Pidgin” was bound to thrive in such circumstances, and corruptions of both English and Maori words were inevitable. Bidwill mentions terms like **debil** and **taboo** (the Maori word is **tapu**), notes that **walkers**, canoes (**waka**), was “in common pronunciation,” and refers to **green stone maries** (**mere**) “as the whites call them.”

The combined effect of intent on the part of the missionaries and of slovenliness on the part of the remainder of the European population certainly left their mark on Maori speech. It is highly probable that the European entry into this country caused considerable vowel changes in the native language, since the missionaries set about pouring it into an English mould.

As Bidwill’s observations were made in 1840 they are worthy of consideration. “At this place (near Tauranga),” he writes, “I first observed the deficiencies of the alphabet introduced by the missionaries; it consists only of fourteen letters and although B and P are frequently used in

*“Of course I do not include the missionaries, who all speak the language fluently,” he remarks.

*speaking** their sounds are represented by P and R in writing. The indiscriminate use of these letters is the consequence, producing great confusion and embarrassment to learners of the language. Thus some tribes will say Rimu, and others Dimu; Kerrykerry and Kiddikiddi, etc.; and others will use the sound expressed by R in their alphabet in such a way that it would puzzle any European to understand what was said. I certainly think it would be much better if the alphabet had been furnished with all the letters that the natives could have sounded. . . . The natives have neither F, G, I nor L, but change them for other letters; S they leave out entirely. It is impossible to make them pronounce any words having these sounds in them: for instance, knife is **nihee**, the two syllables and the N H being distinct. My name, John, is **Honi** (pronounced Honee); James, **Hemi**, etc. Wilson is changed to **Widdihinna**; Stack, **Tacea**; Chapman, **Tappimanna**, with a suppression of H at the beginning, or not quite **t'happimanna**. The nearest approach to be found for my name was **Biddy-widdi** or **Piddiwiddi**. . . . Very few except missionaries are called by their surnames, all the others being **Honis**, **Hemis**, **Widdims** (Williams), etc.

"The framer of the alphabet was, I understand, thus sparing of his letters, in order to make the language as simple as possible, without taking into account the difficulties of expressing with them those modulations of sound on which the richness and melody of a language so much depend."

To what extent the native language has been modified by its reduction to English writing should be a source of fruitful study. It is a subject, however, that cannot be dealt with further here, except to add that Bidwill's remarks should be accepted with reservation, not because they are necessarily wholly incorrect, but because he is inclined to be careless in some of his observations. He identifies the **ai** in Waikato with an

*My italics.

English **y** and declares that **hau** "is pronounced exactly as **how** in English." Of **Kawhia**, which he renders also as **Carwia** and **Carfwea**, he says, "I do not know the correct orthography of the name which is a very puzzling one to spell, as we have no letters to represent the peculiar blending of the **r** with some other sound before the **w**, it might as well be an **h** as an **f**, but most Europeans to make the matter easy call it at once **Carfeea**."

These are all interesting comments in view of the year (1840) when they were written.

Although this branch of the subject really comes under the heading of pronunciation—to be dealt with in the next chapter—the opinions of J. C. Crawford, writing on "The Maori Language", in *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute*, 1885, on the mispronunciation and mis-spelling of Maori in New Zealand, are worthy of quotation.

After dealing with numerous anomalies that exist in English speech, he remarks: "All these various defects in English orthography have a strong bearing upon the future of the Maori language. That language has been brought into a phonetic orthography, and many of the European settlers understood this: but every day fresh arrivals come from England who know nothing of the subject, and who proceed to damage the Maori tongue. The culprits are to be found in the Post Office Department; as compositors in newspaper offices; as officials in the Land Office; and in the public generally. Thus we find the native names mis-spelt and made ridiculous." He mentions the cases of **Petone** for **Pito-one**, **Tenui** for **Tinui**, **Kaiwarra** for **Kaiwharawhara**, **Mangahao** for **Mangahoa**. "When I traversed the Forty-mile Bush some twenty-four years ago (ca. 1861) I put this name down as **Mangawha**, which is practically the same as **Mangahoa**," he adds. "**Mangahao** does not give the sound at all. **Pauatahanui** is converted into **Pahautanui**. **Ohiro** is not mis-spelt, but is pronounced **Ohairo**, and so on. One could find many similar examples. But what can be

expected when the English alphabet is treated in this way in practice: when the child is taught that **a** = **ae**, and no symbol is given for the broad **a**; that **i** = **ai**; that **u** = **iu**, etc."

Crawford's remarks were made in 1885. The succeeding half-century has not improved the position by any means. To-day we find hundreds of mutilations of Maori place-names in general currency, mutilations which, not being sufficiently obvious to the general speaker to make him recoil from using them, threaten to become standard. A few of those within the neighbourhood of Wellington are **Muritai**, with the first vowel pronounced as **you**; **Paraparaumu**, pronounced **Paraparam** (accent on last syllable) or **Parapram**; **Titahi Bay**, rendered as **Teetai** or **Teetoy Bay**; **Karori**, pronounced **Krory**; **Makara** as **Makra**; **Porirua** as **Porarua**. The National Broadcasting Service of New Zealand has made some highly commendable efforts to arrest this disheartening misuse of Maori vowels, but they are clearly fighting an uphill battle. One hundred and forty years of vowel-mutilation is not to be wiped out in a few years, and a prolonged effort over at least another generation—roughly twenty-five years—will be necessary if success is to meet the worthy efforts of the National radio authorities and some of our educators.

In some instances the difficulties are aggravated by the fact that Maori place-names are themselves corruptions of the English—such as **Hiruharama**, Jerusalem; **Koriniti**, Corinth; **Ranana**, London; **Atene**, Athens, on the Wanganui River—and the problem of instilling respect among Europeans for names of this nature is anything but easy.

As will be seen in the next chapter, Maori place-names have had a decided effect on the pronunciation of English in this country, and the examples given above should not be forgotten.

Appended is a list of a large number of the terms which have been adopted into Maori language from the English:

aata: altar.
Adama: Adam.
aikiha: handkerchief.
Akenehi: Agnes.
Akuhata: August.
amarara: umbrella.
amine: amen.
Amiria: Amelia.
anahera: angel.
Anaru: Andrew.
Ani: Ann.
Aperira: April.
apiha: officer.
aporo: apple.
apotoro: apostle.
aputereihana: arbitration.
Arapeta: Albert.
Arapeti: Alfred.
Arekahanara: Alexander.
ateka: assessor.
atirikona: archdeacon.
Atonio: Anthony.

eka: acre.
Emere: Emily.
Eriha: Elias.
Erihapeti: Elizabeth.
Eruera: Edward.

haapa: harp.
haeana: iron.
hahi: church.
haika: anchor.
haina: sign.
haira: scythe.
haka: jug (jar).
Hakarameta: sacrament.
hama: hammer.
hamanu: ammunition.

hamapuku: humbug.
hamene: summons;
to summon.
hanarete: hundredweight.
Hanuere: January.
haona: horn.
haora: hour.
hapa: supper.
Hapati: Sabbath.
Hare: Charles.
hariata: chariot.
Hatarei: Saturday.
hate: shirt.
hawini: servant.
hawhe: half.
hea: share.
heihei: fowl.
heki: egg.
Hemi: James.
Henare: Henry.
Heni: Jane.
Hepetema: September.
Hera: Sarah.
heremana: sailor.
hereni: shilling.
heteri: sentry.
heti: shed.
heu: shave; (by transfer-
ence) razor.
Hiha: Caesar.
hiko: electricity.
himene: hymn.
hinota: synod.
hipi: sheep, ship.
hiri: seal.
hiriwa: silver.
hita: cedar.
hiti: sheet.
Hoani: John.

hoari: sword.
Hohepa: Joseph.
hoiho: horse.
Hone: John.
honi: honey.
honore: honour.
hopane: saucepan.
hopi: soap.
horera: sorrel.
Hori: George.
horo: shawl.
Horomai: Solomon.
hota: shot.
houra: soda.
hu: shoe.
Huhana: Susan.
huka: hook, sugar.
Hune: June.
Hupurimi-kooti:
 Supreme Court.
Hurae: July.
Huria: Julia.
Huriana: Juliana.
huriparo: wheelbarrow.
Huriu: Julius.
hutuporo: football.
huuri: jury.

iari: yard.
Ihaperā: Isabel(la).
Ihowa: Jehovah.
Ihu Karaiti: Jesus Christ.
Ingarani: England.
inihi: inch, hinge.
ioka: yoke, joke.
itarete: interest.

kahiti: gazette.
kaho: cask.

kamareihana:
 accommodation.
kamera: camel.
kamupene: company.
kamupeneheihana:
 compensation.
kamura: carpenter.
kanara: candle, colonel.
kanga: corn; (by transfer-
 ence) maize.
kaone: gown.
kapa: cup, copper; (by
 transference) penny.
kapata: cupboard.
kapehu: compass.
kapene: captain.
kapeti: cabbage.
kaporeihana:
 incorporation.
kara: colour.
karahi: class, glass.
karaihe: grass.
karaka: clerk.
Kararaina: Caroline.
Kataraina: Catherine.
katikahama: catechism.
katipa: constable.
kau: cow.
kaunihera: council.
kaute: account.
kawana: governor.
kawanatanga:
 Government.
kawenata: covenant.
kehi: case.
kera: kettle.

kereeme: claim.
Kerekori: Gregory.

kiki: gig.
kingi: king; (by transference) reign.
kipa: spur.
irimini: agreement.
Kiritowha: Christopher.
koata: quarter.
koati: goat.
kohua: go-ashore.
kokoroihe: cockroach.
komihana: commission.
komiti: committee.
konotaraka: contract.
kooti: coach, court.
koroka: cloak.
kororia: glory.
koti: coat.
kotimana: Scotch thistle, from "Scotsman".
koura: gold.
kuihi: goose.
kuini: queen.
kuinihi: quince.
kuira: quilt; (by transference) patchwork.
kuki: cook.
kura: school.

Maata: Martha.
Maehe: March.
maero: mile.
mahita: master.
Maka: Mark.
Makarena: Magdalen.
Makareta: Margaret.
makete: market; (by transference) auction.
Mane: Monday.
Manei: Monday.

mapi: map.
marahihi: molasses.
marara: umbrella.
marena: marry.
mata: master. cf. **mahita**.
mati: match.
Matiu: Matthew.
mehua: measure.
Mei: May.
meiha: major.
mema: member.
manemana: amendment.
mera: mail.
Mere: Mary.
merekara: miracle.
merengi: melon.
mihinare: missionary.
mihini: machine.
Mikaere: Michael.
minita: minister.
mira: mill.
miraka: milk.
moata: mortar.
Mohi: Moses.
mokete: mortgage.
moni: money.
motini: motion.
motoka: motor-car.
motuka: motor-car.

naahi: nurse.
nakehe: snake.
nama: number; (by transference) bill, debt, to owe.
nanenane: nannygoat.
neke: snake.
nera: nail.
ngira: needle.

Nikora: Nicholas.
Noema: November.
Nowema: November.
nupepa: newspaper.
oati: oath; (by transference) to swear.
okana: organ.
Oketopa: October.
ota: order.

paahi: pass, purse; (by transference) wallet.

paaka: box. cf. **pouaka**.

paamu: farm.

paati: perch.

(Te) Paea: Sophia.

paera: boiler.

paiheneti: per cent.

paihikera: bicycle.

paipa: pipe.

Paipera: Bible.

paitini: poison.

paki: buggy.

panikena: pannikin.

Paora: Paul.

paparakauta:
 public-house.

Papi: Bob.

papura: purple.

parahi: brass.

parai: fry; (by transference) frying pan.

paraihi: brush.

paraikete: blanket.

Paraire: Friday; bridle.

Parairei: Friday.

paraita: blight.

parakimete: blacksmith.

parakuhi: breakfast.

paramu: plum.

paranene: flannel

parani: brand.

paraoa: flour; (by transference) bread.

pararutiki: paralytic.

parau: plough.

pare: barley.

parei: barley.

paremete: parliament.

parete: potato.

pata: butter; a pot.

patara: bottle.

patene: button; (by transference) farthing.

Patoromu: Bartholomew.

paukena: pumpkin.

pauna: pound, £1.

paura: (gun)powder; (by transference) wheat smut.

Peata: Beatrix.

peihana: basin.

peita: paint;

peke: bag, bank.

pene: pen, penny.

penehana: pension.

penetini: benzine.

Peniamine: Benjamin.

pepa: paper, pepper.

pepi: baby.

Pepuere: February.

pere: pail, bell.

perehi: press, print.

perehitini: president.

pereki: brick.

pereti: plate.

perohuka: bill-hook.

Petera: Peter.

- peti:** bed.
pi: pea, bee.
pia: beer.
pihi: piece; (by transference) a block of land.
piihi: as for **pihi**.
pihopa: bishop.
piira: appeal.
piki: fig.
pikiti: biscuit.
pikitia: pictures.
pine: pin.
pire: bill.
pirihimana: policeman.
pirimia: premier.
piriote: billiards.
Piripi: Phillip.
piriti: priest; bridge.
Pita: Peter.
pititi: peach.
piwa: fever.
poaka: pig, pork.
poari: (a constituted) Board.
poraka: block, frog, frock; (by transference) a singlet or jersey.
poropeihana: probation.
poropiti: prophet.
poti: boat; (pussy-)cat; a vote.
pouaka: box. cf. **paaka**.
poutapata: post-office.
pukapuka: book.
punu: spoon.
purei: to play (**purei hoiho**: a horse race).
purini: pudding.
puru: bull, blue.
- puruma:** broom; (by transference) to sweep.
putu: foot, boot.
putupoora: football.
- Rahorei:** Saturday.
raihana: licence.
raihi: rice.
raima: lime; (by transference) cement, concrete.
raina: line; (by transference) boundary.
raiona: lion, lioness.
raiti: light; (by transference) a lamp.
raka: lock.
rakiraki: duck.
Ratapu: Sunday.
raupani: drying pan.
rautete: trousers.
Rawiri: David.
rehita: register.
reimana: layman.
reitu: to lay to.
rekureihana: regulation.
reme: lamb.
rera: leather; (by transference) a strap.
rerewe: railway.
reri: rail.
reta: letter.
reti: rent, rate; to let.
retu: to lay to. cf. **reitu**.
rewera: devil.
Rewi: Louis.
rihi: dish, lease.
riki: leek; (by transference) onion.

rikona: deacon.
rinena: linen.
rini: ring.
rino: iron.
ripeneta: repentance; to repent.
ripoata: report.
riwhi: relief; (by transference) substitute, successor.
roia: lawyer.
ropere: strawberry.
rore: lord.
rori: road.
rota: lot.
Ru: Louis.
Ruiha: Louisa.
Ruihi: Lucy.
Ruka: Luke.
ruma: a room.
ruri: to rule or measure; (by transference) survey.

Taete: Thursday.
taika: tiger, tigress.
taima: time.
taipo: typhoid.
Tairei: Thursday.
Taitei: Thursday.
takoha: tax.
takuta: doctor.
Tamati: Thomas.
tamato: tomato.
tana: ton.
taone: town.
taporena: tarpaulin; (by transference) waterproof coat.

tapu: tub.
taranata: talent.
tarapu: stirrup.
Tarati: Dorothy.
tarau: trousers.
tarautete: trousers.
tarete: thread.
tari: study (an office).
tariana: stallion.
tauera: towel.
teihana: station.
tekihana: section.
temara: thimble.
temepata: temple.
teneti: tent.
tepara: table, stable.
Tepene: Stephen.
tepu: table.
tera: saddle.
tere: cherry.
terina: train.
tereti: slate.
Tewhano: Stephen.
ti: tea.
tiamana: chairman, German.
tianara: general.
tiati: judge.
Tihema: December.
tikera: tea-kettle.
Tiki: Dick.
tima: steamer.
tini: chain.
tipata: teapot.
Tipene: Stephen.
tiriti: treaty, street.
tiroa: steer-oar.
tiuti: duty.
tiwhikete: certificate.

tokena: stocking.	wariu: value.
Tommi: Tommy.	Wata: Walter.
topitongia: torpedoed.	wati: watch.
tote: salt.	Wenerei: Wednesday.
tuari: steward; (by transference) to dispense, deal out.	wepu: whip.
tumere: chimney.	wera: whale.
tupeka: tobacco.	weti: weight, to weigh, wedge.
Turei: Tuesday.	whaina: fine.
uniana: union.	whaka: fork.
waea: wire; (by transference) telegram, telegraph.	Wherahiko: Francis.
wahina: virgin.	whika: figure; (by transference) arithmetic.
waina: wine, vine.	whira: fiddle.
wakiha: wax.	wiki: week, wick.
wanihi: varnish.	Wikitoria: Victoria.
wapu: wharf.	wira: wheel; will.
warati: warrant.	Wiremu: William.
	witi: wheat.
	wuru: wool.
	wuruhi: wolf.

I have been guided largely by the later editions of the Williams' *Maori Dictionary* in compiling this list. As has already been pointed out, Tregear avoided the inclusion of these corruptions, so that Williams must be accepted as the authority.

Chapter X

THE NEW ZEALAND ACCENT

MORE nonsense has been spoken and written and there is generally more misinformed opinion about pronunciation in this country than about our indigenous slang—which is saying a lot. To deal adequately with “New Zealand English”—to borrow the title of an interesting little volume compiled by Professor Arnold Wall, of Auckland—a good deal of dead wood will have to be cleared away.

The best way to go about this process is to give the facts as I see them first and elucidate them afterwards.

After several years of close study of the subject, during which I have taken many tests of speech in New Zealand, Australia, and England, I have reached the following general conclusions:

- (a) A distinct New Zealand dialect is emerging.
- (b) This dialect has many features in common with, but is not identical with the Australian dialect.
- (c) Even the best-educated New Zealanders, unless they are freshly-returned from England after fairly long residence there, do *not* speak with the educated Southern English accent (which is loosely accepted as “standard” English pronunciation), and, moreover, New Zealanders with a “borrowed accent” tend to lose it rapidly on returning to their own country.

In short, to use the words of the editor of *National Education* (March 1940), “New Zealand speech is distinctively of New Zealand. Nothing is to be gained

and much to be lost by foisting a Southern English dialect upon our children."

Professor Wall, who has been mentioned above, is the only observer to date who has made any comprehensive investigation of the mechanics of New Zealand speech. However, his work has been aimed not at showing the ways in which we are developing a dialect of our own, but at pointing out our lapses from educated Southern English speech. In his introduction to *New Zealand English*, 1938, he makes his object clear: "This book is designed for use by residents in New Zealand who wish to speak 'good' English, or 'standard' English, as spoken by the 'best' speakers in the old land; it is not intended for those who wish to develop a new dialect of English for this country. . . ."

Evidence that supports the conclusion that we are developing a dialect of our own should not be confused with a "wish" to develop such a dialect. I am concerned as far as humanly possible only with presenting the facts.

A dialect emerges when a large number of people in any community speak in a fashion distinct or partially distinct from the speech in other communities. It has become more or less obvious to observant New Zealanders that Australians have developed some strong characteristics of pronunciation of their own; there is no reason why people in this country should expect their lingual destiny to remain characterless.

Resistance to the emergence of a distinct dialect in New Zealand is by no means organized. While the National Broadcasting Service of this country has set out to improve our standard of pronunciation, it is not giving us "standard" or educated Southern English speech but only an adapted form of that speech. I base this conclusion not only upon careful attention to the speech habits of New Zealand announcers as a whole, but upon a number of facts kindly given to me by Professor James Shelley, Director of the National Broadcasting Service.

Professor Shelley states that educated Southern English pronunciation has "generally" been accepted as the standard for New Zealand announcing. (No control is exerted by the N.B.S. in this matter over announcers of commercial stations.) National announcers are required to keep to certain forms of pronunciation, which generally correspond to the B.B.C., but the N.B.S. makes its own decision in regard to words which have particular New Zealand usage. Professor Shelley mentions the B.B.C. distinction between "geezer" for a water-heater and "gaizer" for a hot spring. The latter version is accepted in this country for both senses. B.B.C. Home announcers almost invariably use "awf" for off, "awfn" for often, "akrawss" for across. (These and other comments on B.B.C. practice are based on actual observations in London in 1938 and 1939.) Dominion announcers use the short "o". This is another concession to local usage. Maori place, race-horse and other names are, as far as possible, rendered with their Maori vowel values, but numerous concessions to New Zealand usage are made.

Before dealing further with N.B.S. practice it is necessary to point out New Zealand speech habits as I have observed them. Briefly these are:

- (a) A strong general tendency to resist the use of long vowels, except when such vowels are final.
- (b) A tendency to translate short vowels into unorthodox diphthongs.
- (c) A tendency to equalize and flatten vowel values, with the result that there is less rhythmic nuance in our words and word groups than in English dialects.

Features (a) and (b) have been referred to in general by Professor Wall, but it is in regard to (c) that New Zealand speech reveals its strongest differentiation from usage in England. A sentence like "I'm coming to Wellington to-day if that suits you" is usually rendered

by a casual speaker as a fairly-rapid monotone, both semantemes and morphemes being spoken with almost identical vowel values. (Language elements which present to the mind definite images or ideas are termed "semantemes" and those which serve to express the relations existing between these images or ideas "morphemes.")

Morphemic emphasis is a strong feature of New Zealand speech. Words like "and," "to," and "but" are often strongly stressed. When this occurs it is clear that the cadences to be found in most English dialects will tend to disappear. General English phonemic (or "speech-sound") distinctions are not found in either New Zealand or Australian speech. Whereas "standard English" is predominantly a velar speech, in which the velum or soft palate is used, New Zealanders have a strong tendency to use the hard palate both for vowels and consonants. Morphemic emphasis and the use of the hard palate combine to give Dominion speech a general hardness and evenness, which has been described by some observers as a monotone. Quite apart from their marked preference for sharp vowel sounds—with the tongue movement restricted and tending to remain low in the mouth—the rhythmic cadence in Australian and New Zealand speech is much less marked than in either of those two extremes, the Southern English dialect and the Cockney dialect.

To adopt B.B.C. pronunciation of individual words does not imply that the speaker therefore acquires an educated Southern English pronunciation. Far from it. No keen observer would mistake N.B.S. announcers for B.B.C. announcers. Until the melodic grouping of Southern English speech has been mastered, as well as the selected "standard" pronunciation of various words, no more than the externals will have been tackled.

It is quite impossible for New Zealanders to acquire a Southern English dialect while remaining in their own country. At the most they can acquire some of its more obvious features, but it is doubtful whether any of those

features represent an improvement on educated New Zealand speech. To attempt to impose arbitrarily certain speech habits on New Zealanders, which are entirely out of step with educated speech habits in this country, is not only worthless, but harmful.

The N.B.S. are in serious conflict with general usage in New Zealand in a large number of cases. Below is given a list of words, with the official N.B.S. pronunciation first, and with the pronunciation of the average New Zealander second (by "average" is meant a use favoured by eighty per cent or more of the people):

	<i>N.B.S.</i>	<i>General Use</i>
economic	- eekonommik	- ekkonommik
oral -	- awral -	- orral
acetic -	- aseptik -	- asettik
apparent	- appairent	- apparrent
inherent	- inheerent	- inherrent
evolution	- eevolooshon	- evvolooshon
obscenity	- obseenity	- obsennity
Australia	- awstraylya	- osstraylya
photograph	- fotograhf	- fotograff

Several hundred terms over which there is conflict might be added, but it will be seen, even from these few examples, how strongly marked is the New Zealand preference for the short vowel. In the case of **basic slag**, the N.B.S. has already given up the fight and admitted **bassik** while using **baysik** in other applications. Wall has observed how the short "a" in **chance, dance**, etc., "is very commonly used in New Zealand." Of the use of **korral** for choral instead of the Southern English **kawral** he declares "the short 'o' is almost universal" in this country. The short "a" in photograph, he says, "is so universally used, by the younger generation especially, that it will no doubt prevail in the long run."

Why are long vowels resisted? There are three reasons:

- (a) Long-standing corruptions of Maori place-names, some of which were mentioned in the previous chapter, the Maori vowels having been literally rendered by Europeans **Akatarawa**, all sharpened "a's"; **Waipukurau**, with a sharp "u" in the second syllable; **Eketahuna**, with an initial sharp "e", etc. (This is an influence that goes back to the earliest days of New Zealand history.)
- (b) An objection to long vowels because they are associated with slovenly speech, the New Zealander finding it difficult to distinguish between **awf** and **orf** for off, **frawst** and **frorst** for frost, etc.
- (c) A preference for rapid speech.

Rapidity of speech is possible only at the expense of leisurely melodic phrasing—and it should not be forgotten that educated Southern English and B.B.C. speech is essentially a speech of leisured people—and of the long vowel.

New Zealand speech is therefore characterized by a general equalization of vowel values, most of the vowel sounds of our essential words tending to be short, and by longer phrase-grouping. Both cause a hardness in our speech, which is particularly noticeable to the Englishman, but since hardness is largely coincident with clearness I can see no reason for objection to these features. The contention that many New Zealanders speak indistinctly is a real one, but it only bears out a further conviction I have reached that, not only have we developed dialectal characteristics of our own, but we have also developed (a) an educated New Zealand speech, and (b) a vulgar New Zealand speech, neither of which are Southern English in character.

New Zealand speech has several features in common with English dialects, but it is not identical with any

one of them. As with Australia, this country has been one in which many dialects have fused. Their influence was detected by Edward Wakefield, writing in *New Zealand After Fifty Years*, 1889. In an allusion to shearers and swagmen in the Dominion he said: "The dialect of every county in England or Ireland and frequently Cockney may be detected among them. . . . They use shocking language and seem to take a pride in rivalling one another in the ingenuity and elaborateness of their oaths and epithets." A little later (1898) W. Pember Reeves is to be found declaring in *The Long White Cloud* that the New Zealand speech "is that of communities which are seldom utterly illiterate and as seldom scholarly. I have listened in vain for any national twang, drawl, or particular intonation. The young people, perhaps, speak rather faster than English of the same age, that is all." This reference to rapidity of speech should be noted. In a later allusion to mutilation of Maori vowels he adds: "In Canterbury you would be stared at if you called Timaru anything but **Timmeroo**. In Otago Lake Wakatipu becomes anything from **Wokkertip** to **Wackatipoo**; and I have heard a cultured man speak of Puke-tapu as **Buck-a-tap**." These examples show how deep-rooted is the English sharpening of Maori vowels (especially primary and secondary), while final vowels, of which mention will be made shortly, are lengthened by way of phonemic compensation.

An occasional habit found among New Zealand speakers is that of a dragged, even speech, mainly notable for its drabness of melodic texture. This drawling has been particularly observed in country districts. Generally, it may be described as a varying feature of New Zealand vulgar speech. Since it is a slowed-down version of the more widely used New Zealand dialect, it provides easily-accessible evidence of the difference between melodic grouping in educated Southern English speech and in Dominion speech. Vowel values are equalized,

inflexions subside, and new melodic significance is given to word-groups in ordinary conversation.

The allegation that New Zealanders (as well as Australians) have what is described as a "Cockney accent" has often been levelled, but is impossible to sustain. Even when it is pointed out that the generally-accepted meaning of "Cockney" is "London" and not "Coster," the assertion is little nearer the mark. The best test that can be made of the New Zealand dialect is to examine what happens when a "Cockney" and a person speaking with the Southern English accent reside in this country over any length of time. The speech of both undergoes many changes, and in no way is this reorientation more evident than in melodic phrasing. Over a length of time (which I have not yet established) they cease to be conscious of what they at first call "the New Zealand accent." Their ears not only become deadened to differences that were certainly evident in the first place, but they begin to adopt many features of the New Zealand dialect, notably sharpened vowel sounds, morphemic emphasis, and longer word-grouping.

While not wishing to reflect in any way upon the policy of the N.B.S. or upon the abilities of their announcers, it is necessary to point out that to a vast number of New Zealanders these announcers are regarded as being "affected" in speech or of having "mannerisms." Their speech is not by any means regarded as typical New Zealand speech. On the other hand, in spite of the N.B.S. efforts to follow the general lines of Southern English pronunciation, neither are the announcers speaking with that pronunciation, as almost any intelligent observer from London will rapidly observe. That the announcers are doing their best to follow the B.B.C. pronunciation of various words is not to be doubted, but during the course of several months of careful radio observation in this country I have noted literally hundreds of lapses. Sometimes the announcers give the B.B.C. rendering; sometimes they give the New Zealand

rendering. This I am confident is because they have not mastered the melodic grouping of educated Southern English speech, or have forgotten it as the result of long residence in this country.

The effect of the Maori language on pronunciation in this country has already been mentioned. It is mainly responsible for the emergence of a peculiar characteristic in final "y" and "ie", which are widely rendered "ee", as in "westerlee", "utterlee", "citee", "unanimitee"—all of which, I may add, I have recorded from N.B.S. announcers. This feature, I am confident, has been occasioned very largely by native place-names, Taihape, Petone, Paekakariki, the final vowels of which are all lengthened in popular speech. The effect of vowel-equalization is an attendant feature. By way of compensation for the short hard vowels to be found so often in use—to take an exaggerated case, **municipality**—the final vowel is lengthened, and thereby it is also stressed, instead of being unstressed as in English speech. In cases where there is a final "r" this is frequently slurred. In casual speech **years** tends to become "yee-ers"; in **bitter** the final vowel is often stressed as much as the first. From these and similar cases several unorthodox sound groups have emerged, mainly frontal and with the tongue in a low position in the mouth.

A predominant feature of both New Zealand and Australian speech is the resistance against sounds in which the tongue is in a high raised position either at the back or the front of the mouth. This restricted movement of the tongue has an accompaniment in a restricted use of the jaw and lips. Vowels which therefore tend naturally to be hard are also clipped, and the general New Zealand inclination to speak rapidly results in delayed melodic phrasing—pleasing enough to the New Zealand or Australian ear, but certainly not English.

The purely physical matter of restricted tongue, lip, and jaw movements also produces nasalized vowels. These are caused when the soft palate is lowered so that

air escapes through both nose and mouth—a natural consequence when the mouth is not opened, in any case. The mistake should not be made of identifying New Zealand and Australian nasalization with that of the Cockney or American. Our nasalization comes mainly from attempting to pronounce acutely-sharpened frontal vowels with the mouth closed. **Fact, pageant, Ben, hour, fling** are some of the hundreds of examples I have recorded from the New Zealand radio in which the vowels have been nasalized. Actually, nasalization is not a serious feature of our speech, but it is a tendency which should be recognized and the reasons for it made clear.

The diphthong “au” is probably the only seriously unpleasant sound to be found in common use in this country. Even when the greatest care is taken by a speaker it always tends to become nasalized. With the attendant features in New Zealand of a restricted movement of jaw and lips, this is easily sharpened and given an objectionable nasal rendering. The Continental pronunciation of Latin taught in New Zealand schools (combined with habitual mutilation of Maori vowels) has strengthened the English tendency to render the Maori **au** like the **ow** in “cow”, and the fact that numerous opportunities are given New Zealanders to perfect themselves in this mispronunciation has probably assisted in its nasalization.

When Maori vowels are habitually mispronounced they not only tend to become established in a corrupted form, but also react upon English vowels to standardize them in un-English forms. Hence, the use of unorthodox diphthongs is wide in New Zealand, and this is certainly due in part to the rhyming of Maori **au** and **ao** sounds with “cow”, of **ae** and **ai** sounds with “try”, and of **ea** with the sound noted above in “yee-ers”.

The short “u”, as heard in “but”, emerges in many cases as another result of the restricted tongue and jaw movement. Wall mentions **Alice, Philip, malice**, which

often become Allus, Phillip, malluss. He does not comment, however, on the way New Zealanders frequently reduce a short "o" to a short "u", just as they always tend to reduce the "aw" sound to a short "o". **Fault**, for instance, is rendered as **follt** rather than **fawlt**, but it also tends to become **fult**. So with **salt**, **across**, **choral**, etc. The diphthong in **revolt** tends first to become a short "o" and then a short "u". These examples show the general New Zealand tendency to bring vowel sounds forward in the mouth.

No attempt has been made in this brief review of our speech to examine "right" and "wrong" pronunciations of words. An extremely comprehensive study of this facet of the subject is given in Arnold Wall's *New Zealand English*. All I have been concerned with is the general characteristics of our speech (and to make it as easily understandable as possible I have avoided the use of phonetics). Reduced to a concise form these characteristics are:

- (a) A general sharpening of vowel values, though, by way of compensation, final vowels tend to become long.*
- (b) A strong tendency to give the various vowels in a word the same value; an equalization of stress.
- (c) Palatal speech, that is, retention of the tongue (tip and middle) well forward in the mouth in a flattened position.
- (d) A restricted movement of the tongue, lips, and jaw.
- (e) Rapidity of speech.

*Of the 2121 principal town and place names in New Zealand, 57.47 per cent are Maori, i.e., they end with a vowel. Of the 1056 principal place names in the North Island, 807, or 76.4 per cent, are Maori. These facts are consonant with the New Zealand tendency to lengthen the vowels in final syllables.

- (f) A much longer word-grouping than in English speech.
- (g) The emergence of (i) an educated and (ii) a vulgar New Zealand speech, the former being clear, decisive, and pleasant, though tending to sharp nasalization. This nasalization can be, and is being, killed.

In his book *Australia*, 1930, Professor W. K. Hancock notes the development of "an Australian intonation which, though it is thin and narrow in its range of tone, is expressive and pleasant to the ear." He adds: "Those teachers who struggle against the common curse of debased English would do better to develop the resources of this legitimate accent rather than attempt the impossible task of impressing upon scoffing pupils Oxford English thrice removed."

A similar view was expressed early in 1940 by Mr. B. H. Molesworth, Federal Talks Controller: "Clear Australian speech is nothing to be ashamed of. We don't want imported Americanisms any more than assumed Oxfordisms."

These views are worthy of close attention in New Zealand. The crossing of a Southern English dialect with our own will prove a harmful experiment if it continues. It is obvious that we cannot acquire the former, and there is considerable likelihood that we may not improve the second—which we could well do if we set about developing its resources instead of trying to bludgeon them out of existence.

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